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THE GIRL AND THE BANKER.

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CHAPTER I.

FACING THE END.

Banker John J. Linn pushed the plate away from him and rested his elbows on the table. He had not slept well and breakfast did not tempt him.

He looked with unseeing eyes about the beautiful Colonial home he had built in the pretty suburb and of which for so many months he had thought with pride. He was troubled. Though he might look the world fearlessly in the face, holding his big head up, his bearded chin thrust outward, his plump figure erect and dignified, he could not escape from his own thoughts. Those thoughts had been a jumbled mass of fears and self-condemnation for months and the night before had taken more definite and terrifying shape. Sleep had not driven them away, and in feverish haste he had dressed and hurried to the breakfast table hoping that Laura Dunscombe's great brown eyes would make him forget.

He had found himself alone at the table. Laura, the friend of his dead wife, and his guest, had evidently slept late after their night at the theater and the supper that followed the performance. He waited impatiently for her appearance for ten minutes, wandering aimlessly through the big rooms, and then ensnared to enjoy his breakfast alone.

The housekeeper was absent—she was always absent when Mrs. Dunscombe was a guest at the Linn home—and the cook had not cooked his eggs and toast to suit him.

Banker Linn looked at his watch with an exclamation of surprise at the lateness of the hour, and tried again to finish his morning meal. After a few bites he abandoned the effort and looked gloomily out of the window. He frowned at the bright July sun because its brightness was in such great contrast to his own dark forebodings.

"What a fool I am," he exclaimed, jumping up and pacing the floor. "I must stop this sort of thing or everything will be discovered." He laughed grimly. "To think that John Johnson Linn, the poor Norwegian boy who has steadily risen until he is one of Chicago's biggest men, should be a coward now! Why I faced greater dangers than this when I was nothing but a boy in India." He shook himself. "I must stop it!"

While he was reaching for his hat in the front hall, a woman walked leisurely and with great dignity down the broad staircase. She was tall and stately, despite her loose morning gown. Her hair was dark, almost black; her eyes were deep brown and while there was a look of innocence in them, back and behind this was a suggestive hint of cunning. Her fair, smooth face was seldom rippled with a smile. Her features were almost always in repose. She spoke often enough with her tongue, but her eyes only were expressive. Her voice was soft and well modulated. She was Laura Dunscombe.

"Oh, going so soon?" she asked as she stopped on the last step and looked down at the banker.

"Yes, but it isn't early. It will be nearly eleven o'clock before I get to the bank."

"Oh, well, the bank probably can get along without you for an hour or so."

The woman's face did not change, but there was a note of satire in her tone and a derisive smile in her eyes. Linn answered quickly:

"Now, Laura, I've told you often enough not to talk that way. You know I've granted your every wish, and I think gratitude might prompt you to grant this one for——"

"And haven't I done everything you asked me to?" She looked through him, a strange light in her eyes that stopped his tongue. Then with a tone that seemed a caress, she added softly, "John, I need a thousand dollars today, very badly."

"A thousand dollars!" the banker gasped, "why, I let you have five hundred last week."

"Yes, that was to pay my dressmaker, you know, but I need this to make the last payment on my piano and arrange for some more lessons." The voice changed to a coax. "You know, John, you want me to be a great musician, and I cannot do that and make you proud of me unless I study, and I cannot study if I have to spend all my time working for money to pay expenses."

"But I haven't the money now, Laura," he protested, not at her request, but at the fact that he could not grant it.

"You can get it from the bank."

"My account is already greatly overdrawn, my dear girl."

"Well, what of that. Aren't you the president? Don't you run the bank as you please? I must have the money tonight, John, dear. You'll bring it to me, won't you?"

He turned his face from her and thought a few moment before replying:

"Yes, I'll bring it home tonight. I've a note I can discount and that will fix it all right."

The woman took his face between her hands, leaned down and kissed him. There was no affection, no love expressed in her action, but to the man of sixty years it seemed otherwise, and he smiled joyously as the young woman spoke:

"Thank you, John, you're a perfect darling—the best man in the world."

John Linn left his home and walked jauntily to wait for a car. The sunshine that half an hour before had maddened him with its brightness, now cheered him. The gloomy forebodings had vanished before the smile of a woman's smile. From the front of the house Laura Dunscombe watched the banker with a strange light in her eyes and a strange thought in her heart.

How much longer could she hold him in her power, and how much longer could he hold the Linn State Bank in the hollow of his hands. She was not a heartless woman, but she had a woman's intuition and she felt that things at the bank were not as they should be. Linn had told her nothing definite, but she suspected that he had used the bank as his depository for property and that a day of reckoning must come sooner or later. "But that's his lookout." She ended her surmising with a shrug of her shoulders, and went leisurely to her breakfast. "Men who play with the fire must expect to be burned."

Linn's trip to the bank on Milwaukee Avenue was like a triumphal march. The street car conductor knew him and spoke respectfully. The newsboys knew him and hogged him confidentially to buy their papers. The policeman at the corner where he left the car, knew him and greeted him cordially, the official dignity kept before the lesser of the representative of gold. He paused in front of the cooperative store that was the result of the idea brought from Europe, and the customers and stockholders, and the biters of the bread he provided for him, cheerful smiles and trustful looks.

He passed through the outer rooms of the bank to his private office was stopped several times by women who had brought a small note to add to their savings in the bank. One woman, with joy dancing in her bright eyes, stopped him:

"Oh, Mr. Linn, the made a dollar extra last week and I decided to add it to our regular dollar and put them both in the saving account. I tell you Mr. Linn, it's a fortune to a poor woman not here to have a safe place like your bank to bring our little do-next to. God bless you, Mr. Linn."

"That's good," the banker smiled. "I'm glad for your good fortune. Just keep on working and saving, and I soon have enough to make old age comfortable. Poverty is the one thing Providence wanted us learned back in Norway."

The woman "Ja-ja'ed" triumphantly. "We'll soon have enough to pay off the mortgage on the little home. God bless you."

The city teller and his assistants were busy and had time only to nod smilingly as the banker passed to his private room, and dropped into his big chair. The encounter with the woman had almost unnerved him and he found it hard to keep the feeling in a moment and started to work on his mail.

The letter made short work of the contents, when he had forgotten in the stress of business matters. It was written on blue-note paper, in a woman's hand, and was heavily scented. Linn smiled grimly as he read it and cast it into the grate.

"I'll have to send her a few dollars, I suppose, just to keep her from getting saucy she hasn't heard anything about Laura."

Then he thought of the thousand dollars he had promised to bring to Laura that night, and with a sigh arose and went down to the safe. He opened the private safety box, pulled it out, and then looked cautiously around. Satisfied that no one was watching him, he reached into the box, unlocked another, a secret box, behind the other, and threw it down. A note, and a package of cash beneath it was a pile of papers that looked like promissory notes and mortgages. Hastily took out one of the notes and slipped it into his pocket and had almost pushed the drawer back into its secret hiding place when he drew it out again, snatched up the note book and hurriedly replaced the two drawers. Slowly he returned to his desk.

The noise of the busy city came to Linn through the open window, sounding low with the heat of summer. With his hands in his trousers' pockets, his head on his chest, he heard it without weeping to hear. Then the jumble of noises seemed to take on new meanings. There was the voice of the poor woman who had blessed him; here was the voice of Laura, who had lent all his savings through the rascality of his banker; again the low, soft voice of Laura drowned the other noises, and he heard only the voice of the clamor of thousands for his life.

At last he shook himself. "Bah! Linn you are getting to be a great big fool. Wake up!"

He took the note from his pocket and filled it out—a promise to pay five thousand dollars. It was already signed. Then he called the cashier:

"Paul, my personal account is about exhausted, I believe. Here, take this note and give me credit for $4,800. I think $200 is a good deposit."

The cashier looked at the note. The name signed to it was that of a prominent politician, a friend of the banker, and worth in himself the amount named. He nodded. Paul waited. He had gone through this performance so often in the last year that he hesitate long:

"And Paul, I'll take about two thousand in cash. Credit the balance to my account."

"Yes, sir."

The cashier left, to return in three minutes with the money which he carefully counted out to Linn, who counted it again, watch the process. He was again lost in his own thoughts, and started nervously when by at his chief as he started for the door. He paused an instant, and the banker added:

"And Paul, I'll take the rest of the letter that in the private ledger."

"Yes, sir." The cashier grew bolder. "Mr. Linn, that private ledger account is getting pretty big."

"Yes, yes, I know it," Linn answered impatiently. "I'll fix it up soon—maybe next week. I expect to be cleaned out in September Pack then."

The cashier smiled meaningly.

"And by the way, Mr. Linn, Redding has been snooping about a good deal lately."

The banker's face suddenly became overcast. A cloud came into his eyes, but before he spoke he had mustered up a cheerful smile.

"Oh, well, he's a director and the vice-president, Paul, and maybe he thinks he's only looking after—"

"Yes, sir, but sometimes even fools can see when a mud fence is rotten."

"But he won't find anything crooked to his credit, Paul," Linn said.

"That private ledger, Mr. Linn."

"That isn't crooked, Paul," the banker was growing impatient.

"Well, it looks queer, anyhow, and Redding knows it. He's been nosing around, to get all sorts of fool notions about things."

"Don't bother about it, young man," Linn snapped. "I'll look after Mr. Redding and that private ledger both."

"Yes, sir."

As the cashier closed the door Linn's telephone rang. It was a private line he had had run into his office from the city office in order to prevent any of the bank employes from overhearing his conversations with persons on the outside. The man who wanted to talk to him was a gambler named Jim Brown.

"Hello, Mr. Linn," the telephone said. "Are you ready to talk business?"

"What is it, Jim? Another fixed race?"

"Nothing fixed about this one, Linn. Just got a good horse in with a bunch of dogs in the fourth race at Lutonia. The dogs are all fixed, but the horse is straight and are laying a long price on her—fifteen to one."

"Sure thing is it, Jim?"

"Sure thing. It's a cinch. Why, the only way that horse can lose today is to fall down. How much shall I put up for you? A hundred bones?"

"Let me see, Jim. No, since it's a cinch, I think I'll make it a thousand. Is that enough?"

"That's the stuff, Mr. Linn. You're a sport, you are. Meet me at Progne's at seven, and I'll have the dope. You're a lead pipe I'm telling you, an' it ain't no string either, Mr. Linn."

Linn hung up the receiver thoughtfully.

"Now, that's the way to urge him, himself, "may be nothing but a professional tout, and then he may be a square gambler. Any way I'll take a chance. If he's on the square and if I could have a streak of luck on the races, it would be the making of me, me final outcome. I shall unburden myself of a big load."

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The young man sprang to his feet, with a pleased look in his face, and hurried over to the city editor, to get the good assignment he knew would be his—on the society Jewel mystery scandal. The city editor spoke without looking at Joe Graham, who in the past had come to the paper, a green, raw cub, had grown into one of the most energetic and trustworthy reporters, uniting the ability to get the news with the skill necessary to write it into a good story.

"Sherry," Joe, but I'll have to get you to run out to that reception and ball at Redding's on the northwest side. Martin Redding, you know, is cashier of the John Marsh bank, and a half a dozen other things with money in 'em. Mrs. Redding is one of the society end of that regatta, and I'm afraid she'll not be back time."

He looked up, saw the disappointment so plain in Joe's face, and added sympathetically: "Come, cheer up, Joe. It won't take you long, and if you'll hurry back maybe I can get you the jewelry story. Besides, it's really to be Margaret Redding's debut, and I believe you met her last summer at the lake. Jump, now, and get back quicker."

Joe had not waited to hear the end of his chief's sentence, but at the prospect of adding the disagreeable task done in time to work on the "big" story, he grabbed his coat and hat, and called back as he hurried down the stairs:

"Save that story till eleven o'clock for special edition, Sherry, and mention something big happens at Redding's."

The one elevator that ran at night for the benefit of the employes of the building just passing the floor, going down, as Joe came to the elevator shaft. He waved to the man but not hear, so he bounded down the stairs, two and three at a time, and by the time the car was just passing the corner as he emerged from the building, and he swung onto the rear end with a wave of his hand to the motorman who compelled to wait.

The ball being a ride to the home of Martin Redding, millionaire, a few blocks distant from Banker Linn's home, passed almost before Joe had become aware of it. He was thinking of Margaret Redding, and the few words he had spoken to her at the last preceding summer, when he had been fortunate enough to be on hand to rescue her from the attentions of a fortune hunter.

The acquaintance had been formed with her a great deal that summer, but had not progressed. He wondered if Margaret if she would remember him and their friendship. Then he shook the fact that on this night he would be among a crowd "sticking his nose into other people's business," as he described her from his inner thoughts and partially succeeded, by saying to himself, "Bosh, what's it to me? I'll fall in love with her if she'd let me. Maybe I'll do it anyway."

Banker Linn was at the Redding party. He had accepted the invitation, that had been extended to the president of the bank preceding summer, when he had been fortunate enough to be on hand to rescue her from the attentions of a fortune hunter. He had been

"Ah, Miss Redding, I hope you'll pardon me. I was looking for a little information your mother was unable to supply us. Sorry to intrude with my business, but you know it is my business."

He drew her trembling hand through his arm, and led her across the hall toward a cosy corner.

"Oh, I'm so glad you came back, Joe."

The girl's voice almost broke. Joe pressed her hand with his arm and spoke calmly:

"There, Margaret, brace up. You don't want all these people to think there's anything wrong. Keep your face turned down. Of course I'm back. I said I'd wait."

He made her sit with her back to the others, her face hidden. With a pretense of arranging the pillows behind her back, he gave her time to become more composed. Then he sat beside her, facing the room and with the front and side door in range of his vision.

"Now tell me if I can help you, Margaret? Something has gone wrong—something you were not anticipating?"

"No! Yes!" She laughed half hysterically, and then with an angry shrug added, "What a fool you must think I am, Joe."

"No—I'll not tell you what I think of you —not now."

A faint smile illumined her features. She rested her hand on his arm for an instant before speaking abruptly:

"You must be my knight, Joe. I need you again," he could see the tears in glistening in her eyes, "almost as bad as I needed you last summer."

"Oh, no, it isn't as bad as that." The man tried to ward off a presentiment of evil. "You are excited over the affair tonight."

"No," the girl of serious-eyed council him to look intently at her. "No, it isn't that. I don't know how to tell you. But I must ask you to help me—and not ask too many questions." She bravely tried to smile.

"Trust me? Well, I've learned so much myself, I suppose I ought not kick when the tables are turned. And I'll try to be patient and refrain from asking questions. What is it?"

She looked wistfully reprehensively before replying:

"I—I am afraid things are not just right at the bank."

"Oh, that's all." He was relieved.

"All!" Her surprise was not feigned. "Isn't that enough? Isn't father a director in the bank? Isn't he going to—I want to be sure I see things go wrong there?"

"Well, Margaret Redding, Linn's bank is considered one of the soundest and best managed in the city of Chicago, even though it is a state bank. I'm afraid you are making mountains of molehills."

"Then I'm glad," replied impatiently. "I am convinced there is something wrong, and I want you to help me find—"

"Why do you think so?"

The question came like a shot. The girl recoiled.

"Oh, but you are not to ask me questions, Joe. You promised. You must trust me. I am afraid for father. Of course he hasn't done anything wrong. But he is a director and maybe he will say he ought to have known. Will the law say that?"

The question came in a torrent, and with such earnestness and fear that Graham was convinced of her sincerity. He could give her little hope.

"Well—" he hesitated, "a general thing for directors are charged with the responsibility of knowing what is going on in their banks, Mrs. Redding, but of course your father is—"

"Oh, of course he is innocent," she said impatiently. "And of course I may be wrong, but I have fearful suspicions, and a well founded one which you must not ask me now how, and I want you to find out if they are true."

"You were talking to John Linn out on the veranda."

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A lady in a Wisconsin town employed a physician who instructed her not to eat white bread for two years. She called certain details of her sickness and she certainly was a sick woman.

"In the year 1897 I gave out from overwork, and until 1901 I remained an invalid in bed a great part of the time. Had different doctors, but nothing seemed to help. I suffered and from cerebral spinal meningitis. Grease troubles and serious stomach and bowel trouble. My husband called a new doctor and after being gone with me out any food for ten days the doctor ordered Grape-Nuts for me. I could eat the new food from the very first mouthful. The doctor kept me on Grape-Nuts and the only medicine was a little glycerine to heal the alimentary canal.

"When I grew up again Doctor told me to eat Grape Nuts twice a day and no white bread for two years. I got well in good time and have gained in strength so I can do my own work again.

"Grape-Nuts has been food so much and I know that the Grape-Nuts food did this, too. I found I had been made ill because I was not digesting right; that is, I did not properly digest white bread and some other food I tried to live on.

"I have never been without Grape-Nuts food since and eat it every day. You may publish this letter if you like so it will help some one else." Name given by Postum Co., Battle Creek, Mich. Get the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Real Stuff.

Hefty—"I'm getting too stout. Wish I could take something to make me less."

DeThyne—"I tell you where you can get it—if you have the price."

Hefty—Where?

DeThyne—In that saloon on the corner.

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Joe spoke abruptly, sternly. The girl's face grew white, and her gaze fell before his, confessing the truth of his statement.

"What did he say?"

Margaret's face grew red with shame at the memory of the scene which the question recalled. She was silent a moment, then laid her face down and sobbed straight into Joe's eyes:

"I cannot tell you that, Joe. Again I ask you to trust me and help me. I need your help, Joe, for my sake, and for father's and mother's. Oh, I'm in deeper trouble, disgrace, perhaps from death, and to save me from disgrace."

She buried her face in her hands and his body shook with a low and smothered oath. Joe caught one of her hands and raised it to his lips:

"I'll fight for you, Margaret, if it's the last thing I ever do." She bravely tried to smile, and he muttered as she could just catch the words: "it's the last thing I'll want to do—fight for you."

Then Linn entered through the front door and scowled at the sight. Joe saw the scowl and answered it with a look of contemptuous challenge, then slowly raised Margaret's hand to his face and pressed it with his lips, while he continued to gaze into Linn's eyes. The banker's scowl turned to a look of rage, and he turned and went back into the summer night.

CHAPTER III.

THE CRASH.

Banker John J. Linn had a restless night and an anxious day after the Redding reception. He was not a man to trouble his memory the challenging, triumpant face of Joe Graham. He knew vice and worse than young man was, and a few judicious inquiries which elicited the information that Graham had been "broke" sometimes, resourceful reporter who had seldom been baffled, caused him no further concern. Had Margaret Redding told the man the gist of their talk, Graham would have had much further to prison if she ever mentioned it. Had she taken the risk, hoping from the slip he had made to convince him of the belonging proof of the innocence of her father, that Graham would be able to restore confidence of Redding's guiltlessness? He did not think she had given him the slightest hint of what had made to her, which had led him to make these threats after one had departed and the other left. He felt sure a shame would keep her silent as to that.

On that day, Linn reached the bank, the door of his office open that he might see every one who entered. He did not want to be taken by surprise. He was sure that Graham did not "come poking around there" without some definite object in view. As the day grew to an end and Graham did not put in an appearance, Linn's anxiety and fear lessened. He began to think that perhaps he had misinterpreted Graham's motive for calling at the bank. After all, Margaret had told nothing. Perhaps Graham had misconstrued her to be a rival in love. The thought brought him comfort and it was with a light heart and a buoyant step that he left the bank just before six o'clock to meet Jim Brown in the city and learn the result of the latter's mission in connection with "There was no one at home to demand his presence," Linn thought, and he had parted with him about Laura and had left the house, had not returned. The housekeeper would have known, Linn argued, and the city for a few weeks' visit in the North.

Banker Linn was the only man in the young man in the gray suit, with his soft hat pulled down over his eyes, who, from the cigar store on the corner, watched him, followed him on the car, and dogged his footsteps as he left the car and walked home. Wailing. It was Joe Graham, disguised sufficiently so that he could not be identified without a close inspection, though a friend might have known him at a glance, and when Joe had secured permission to be absent from the office on his own time for several days, then he had left the city. He knew he had a tip that might or might not develop a great news story. The chief had only asked him to report every now and then.

Followed Banker Linn to the restaurant Jim Brown from the saloon to a restaurant, from the restaurant on a trip to the levee district, and then—the one time he had lost the reappearance of the man, the policeman on the corner knew him, and quickly putting him to wait without being disturbed. He followed the banker when the latter emerged from the house, and then—cutting street, back to his home on the Northwest side, and then—entered into his apartment with a triumphant. "Bankers don't usually do such things unless there's a mighty loose woman in the case. I could cut the woman don't very often help a banker to keep his accounts straight. Well, I've struck town, get a little sleep, and get after the cashier tomorrow."

Banker Linn confident his suspicions had been baseless, slept late that morning, and was in a nearly nervous state when he left bank, smiling and fearless. As he entered the bank, Graham, who had been loitering into a grin, and back of the confident look in his eyes crept a look of fear. Joe Graham, in his capacity as reporter for the bank, and at the Reddings'—was standing at the cashier's desk. And when Banker Linn saw him stopped for the smallest part of a second, bowed to Joe, and then greeting, and passed quickly into the private office. The cashier excused himself to Joe and went to go in and see Mr. Linn. Evidently he knows you, but we have to be on the safe side, you know."

Joe smiled as Knudson followed Linn. "He'll tell Linn all the inquiries I've been making. That will make the old's wounded suspicions, then nervous, then afraid, and when he gets to that point he's sure to do something to let the cat out of the bag."

The reporter's surmise was correct. The cashier told Linn that Graham had come to open an account with the bank. He had asked a number of questions about its condition, especially with reference to the discounted notes. He had also shown suspicious knowledge of Linn's outside investments and seemed to know that the cooperative store had eaten up many thousand dollars. This was quite suspicious, then very afraid, but he quickly determined to try to scare off Graham with bluff and bluster and he told Paul to send the reporter in to see him.

The man did not waste time skirmishing. Graham, a half smile on his face, stood at the corner of the desk. The banker looked up with a frown:

"See here, young man, I'd like to know what business you have constituting yourself a bank examiner. The State appoints men to do that work."

"Yes, but some of them evidently forget what they are appointed for, Mr. Linn. I was merely making some inquiries previous to opening an account with this bank."

Bluh. The cashier tells me he gave you a copy of our last printed statement. If that does not satisfy you, I am not forced to deal with us."

"I understand all that, Mr. Linn," the tone of sarcasm was very noticeable. "I read the statement, but I was asking questions to secure information that the statement didn't give me."

The banker was very angry. He shook his finger in the smiling face of the young man.

"I know what you are. You are a newspaper reporter. You are always sticking your nose into other people's business. But let me tell you, young man, my private affairs don't concern you or the dirty sheet you work for."

"The private affairs of every man who is so much in the public eye as you are, Mr. Linn, are of interest to the public, and are of special interest to the many thousand poor people who have entrusted their savings to you."

The tantalising, challenging half smile that hovered around Graham's mouth proved more provoking than words. It was a grunt that told of anger and fear, he could do to check.

"Huh. I don't care to waste any more time with you."

"Oh, very well, Mr. Linn," Joe answered lightly as he stepped to the door, "but you will remember, I have given you warning that depositors won't be so easily answered when they begin to ask questions. A poor man, especially if he is ignorant and has an ignorant wife to egg him on, is apt to get very angry when he learns that the man he has entrusted his savings with doesn't get home until three o'clock in the morning. Good-day, sir."

"One moment, sir. Wait," he shouted. Joe looked back questioningly. Linn followed and caught his arm, whispering the question:

"What's the game, Graham? Blackmail? How much?"

Joe shook himself free with a mocking laugh.

"Your work's very, very coarse, Linn. Why, your friend Jim Brown could do better than that."

"Jim Brown! You know—"

"Oh, yes, I know a number of things; but you can't buy my silence with money."

"Sit down, come back and sit down." The banker was feverishly anxious. "Tell me what you want."

Graham spoke slowly, distinctly, emphasizing each word with a rap on the desk and looking straight into Linn's eyes:

"I want the proof that Martin Redding knows nothing, has never known anything of his wife's connection with the store, confidence that may exist in the management of the bank to any extent."

The banker laughed boisterously:

"You can't get that, my young friend, because so far as I know there doesn't exist any crookedness."

Graham waited for the outer door without replying. Linn called derisively:

"Where are you going, Graham, it's a good thing there is a libel law in the State of Illinois, isn't it?"

Joe turned, replied quietly, "and a better thing there is a law punishing embezzlement and forgery. Make mine business honest."

The banker quailed almost imperceptibly before the knowing glance from Joe, but the reporter was out of the room before he could reply. He thought as he left the bank:

"There's something wrong, or the old devil wouldn't have been so anxious to shut me up. If there's any real crookedness he won't call my bluff. If everything's straight Margaret's father is safe, and I've just one more enemy to look out for. I think I'll run out and see if I can't get something more definite out of her. She's a queer kid, but she's got too much sense to put me onto a job like this without some pretty good reason."

Of far different character were the thoughts that thatched like a nightmare before Banker Linn's mind. The man's bravado vanished as the door closed on Graham. How much did Margaret told him? How much had he learned since then? Evidently something or he would not have known about the preceding night's carousal. Had Margaret told him? Was she remaining silent in order to give him a chance to work out? He racked his brain to remember whether he had said anything that would incriminate the girl, and swore at the thought that he had been so carefully ready for the "rainy day." Hundreds of them he knew by name. Hundreds of their given names. And in all these thousand faces he could not see one that bore a look of sympathy, even of mercy for a man who would steal their savings. He shuddered at the thought and surrounded by Margaret and Redding and Graham, but there was no consolation for him. He was alone, and the gift silent with threats he never intended to carry out, but these would have no effect on the reporter. Graham was not to be bluffed. He knew that the banker would not dare attempt to carry his threats into execution. Then a satanic gleam came into his eyes. He had thought of a way of escape. He would force Redding to do his bidding, make him a thief, stop Margaret's evident determination, and end under her call for help. The plan was devilish in its cunning, heartless, cruel in its details, but it was to his only salvation.

He would go to Redding with a proposition that would make him a thief and an embezzler and a party to a forgery if he were accepted. Redding would refuse. Yet, of course, but then he would play his master stroke. He would tell the father that Margaret ought to marry immediately, to save herself and her family from disgrace. Redding would be afraid, but it would not kill him, but would grow calmer at the suggestion that the child only become engaged. Then he would demand the proof, and Linn would lead him to believe instructions that the banker had the proofs, but would not make the father's grief the greater by telling him the name of the author of his daughter's betrayer. Then, while Redding was overwhelmed with gratitude for what he would make his offer. He would marry Margaret, save her good name and her parents from disgrace. He was sure that that act of kindness her father must help him a very long way.

Only once as he mentally worked out the details of his plan did he falter. It was think of its character, but he banished the thought instantly. A man who would not stop to think of the ruin of a girl's life, would have even less hesitancy about robbing her of the reputation of possessing a.

To prevent Redding from going to Margaret and upbraiding her before he had become a thief, Linn planned to have the interview at the bank the second day later than today—when Redding would go, according to his usual custom. Then with the proof of Linn's failure to carry out his threats, Margaret, forgo her, with threats of Redding's betrayal, to submit to him. After that he was confident she would go away with him when he saw the time had come for flight.

Again he laughed, but the laugh died down when the faces of the poor depositors began to march before his mind's eye; they were angry, their eyes were inflamed with the thirst for blood. He shuddered as he heard their cries, slammed his desk shut, and rushed out into the open air. Graham was standing at the corner. He waved his

(Continued on page fourteen.)

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THORNS OF SIN;

Or OUT OF THE MISERY OF THE PAST.

By CONSTANCE BEATRICE WILLARD.

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CHAPTER X.

THE TOOTH OF REMORSE.

Rushing from the soothing presence of the innocent young girl, Senator Williams made his way through the blinding snow, scarcely caring where he went, only longing to kill the horrible remorse which gnawed at his very soul. His public life had been spotless. Where others had fallen, tempted beyond their puny strength, he had risen, and again and again brought good out of evil. He had fathered and carried through more reform bills than any other Senator then in the house, and the public recognized this and was very proud of him, for while the grafters have influence, the general public is proudest of a man who not only can control others, but also himself.

Still, although his public career was marked by a series of triumphs of good over evil, this man, who labored constantly for the good of his kind, wandered through the driving storm almost heart-broken.

His love for the golden-haired angel of maidenly beauty and purity seemed to be just left, the best and greatest thing his life had ever produced, was consuming him. So commingled with it was the one shame deed of his life. But for that he would have boldly entered the lists. He was a strong man, and one who seldom failed in his undertakings. As he tore along, like one demented, he thought of the one love of his life, most reverential love for her, and he groaned as he recognized that he was not fit to touch the hem of her dress.

"My God, how I am punished!" he cried again and again.

His life was without reproach. A man of strong passions and emotions, he held them in perfect control, and save for that one fact, his private life had been as pure as his public career.

"Yet, am I any worse than other men?" he asked himself. He was tempted that this was not the question. Other men might do as they liked, he must be responsible for his sins by theirs.

How the snow fell! It reminded him of that snow storm upon a certain Christmas Eve, when he had blackened his soul forever. About that he could not think before, he thought little.

Wrong had been done, but it was but the natural outcome of conditions. The deed which was crushing him to the very earth was that he, a strong man, had raised his hand against the poor victim of his lust and driven her from him. He had raised him and bore beneath her naked body the fruit of their mutual wrong doing, out into the storm.

"If I could wipe out that terrible sin with my life blood, I would gladly shed it," he cried, raising his white face toward Heaven. He strove washing away his tears and setting upon his white brow.

Reared in an atmosphere of almost fanatical religion of which he was ignorant, he had gradually emerged into a broader belief, which promised forgiveness and included all who repented fully.

I repent, oh God, I repent!" he sobbed. "But how can I atone?"

As he thought of the girl he loved so truly and purely, he felt he was almost profaning her, by loving her so tenderly.

"Yet, I think I could make her happy," he thought. "For every year would be my law. I would not ask too much of the children today, but try and relieve her from the terrible strain under which she is now living. I would teach her the beauty of love and its possibilities. Within my soul there has grown up a reverence which would surround her at all times. A man of the people, I would keep her away from all that is gross or commonplace, and by my strength nature I would teach her the beauty of helping others," then again the thought of that horrible blot came up and his hands clung to his white hair, and the tears froze upon his cheeks.

He seemed haunted. Again he saw the great barn, with the dim interior, and heard the pitiful young voice calling:

"Seth, oh Seth!"

He did see the little shivering figure so pathetically clad, hovering by the door, appealing to him, the only creature in all this world on whom she had a claim, and hers the most sacred, that of her dawning motherhood.

The terrible nightmare was before him in all its ghastly detail, and he realized with a force of a strong nature the wife who had forced the pulling boy into such a crime, the wife who had lain in her unholy grave for many a day.

"There is hope for the murderer, even the traitor may be actuated by mistaken ideals, but for one like me, nothing but God's mercy can avail. There is none!"

Those who saw him forging ahead, not knowing where he was driven, would have had difficulty in recognizing the stately, grandly handsome Senator, for he was handsome with a broad, grand manly beauty, that showed in his white hair, his large features, his firm mouth, and the piercing glance of his dark eyes. His was not a happy face, but it was a powerful, commanding one, and those who knew him felt sure that far greater honors were ahead of him, though he was then unhappy without the love of this girl, whom he recognized as the mate of his soul.

"I have tried to offer up my life in expiation of my sin," he muttered, almost aloud, "but what good? I have helped those who have been wronged, I have tried to protect the young and helpless, I squandered of time and money, and still the load grows heavier. Bless me, those songs of hers have done more to help me than anything I have ever heard or thought. Yet, can I ever go to her? Can I ever be worthy in her pure and young? Have I any right? I have laughed at her the error in all this world to make me happy, and I honestly believe for me to make happy, and yet is she not the young and handsome one? If she were only a woman instead of a child! If she had only passed through some of the dark places of life! It seems cruel, but I know that such a nature as hers is destined to mingle with it, and that the one shield another from fate. I wish that she had suffered something, for then, for her, as that I could lift her trouble and make her my loving woman."

Then came the thought of the handsome young man who was her shadow, and the heart-sick man groaned.

"God in Heaven," he cried, reverently. "Is there any reason why I, who am to control a soul to be wasted upon a mere society man? Is that to be her fate? Is that pearl destined to be cast before swine? Surely she will never be more than what he is today. In a ballroom full of the selfish, light-hearted men, intent upon extracting pleasure from life, and never recognizing its responsibilities? If it is ordained that I should surround her, for greatest misery will be mine, then I will strive to lift hands in anguish.

Suddenly his face was distorted by a scornful smile:

"Daisy Gordon thinks that my mission in life is to remain Senator Williams, do she not think I owe her anything. I have willingly given her the almighty dollar in return for what she has done for me. No, Daisy, I cannot see things your way."

He drew his watch and raised it to the narrow-stricken man took his bearings. Called a cab, and was driven back to his hotel.

CHAPTER XI.

WHAT CAN THIS WOMAN MEAN?

Elaine Leighton was walking rapidly along the block where her mother lived, looking like a snow fairy in her white serge dress, coat and hat trimmed with white fur and furs and cap of ermine. Her skirt was but a little behind her shoe tops, and her lovely golden hair hung in two braids to her knees, where they ended in a curl. She almost skipped as she hurried along, for her rosy lips were humming a song.

Many men in the street girl envied her, the daughter of the Governor, surrounded by all that wealth could give and the favorite child of the ruler of the state, and yet if they could have looked into that young girl's heart they would have read?

As she went along, a woman observed her and hastened after, and as she walked beside the little figure the second woman presented a striking contrast to the hard-some contrast.

Her magnificent figure adorned by a priceless cloak of sable, was more to be admired than usual. Above and just beneath this wonderful cloak of fur appeared the scarlet, her favorite color, and the hat upon her dark tresses was of scarlet velvet, with fur and sable. She was a wonderfully striking woman, and yet there was something lacking in her face and manner, which made delicate colorings appear coarse in contrast with Elaine's dainty beauty.

As she caught up with the Governor's daughter she said cordially:

"Good morning, Miss Leighton."

Elaine turned. She had often met and received this Queen of Society's advances, but did not admire her. In fact, she always felt a certain shrinking when in her presence, although she endeavored to control her feelings so as to show nothing of this.

"Good morning," replied Elaine, extending her white-gloved hand, and smiling. Then Daisy Gordon hesitated a moment, then said abruptly:

"I don't think it fair for me to take your hand just now, for I'm going to give you the devil, and I want to see if you care to take it out to you to keep it yet longer."

Elaine looked at her a moment, then said in her even tones, her face remaining perfectly expressionless:

"Very well, as you please, although I must confess that I cannot quite understand you."

"Probably not."

Silence continued between the two for the next block, then Daisy asked:

"Where are you going?"

"To see a sick child at the other end of town."

"Do you like that kind of work?"

"What kind?"

"Visiting the poor, etc."

"Sometimes we do things which are not exactly our choice," was the dignified reply.

"What good do you think you can do going into a house of misery in those clothes?" looking a little scornfully at the exquisite purity of the girl's clothing.

"None, perhaps."

"Then why do you go?"

"My father asked me to go."

"What do you take with you but that which will arouse envy, hatred and general discontent."

"I take in the first place, a roll of bills from the Governor which will pay the doctor and supply the necessities for the sick one," Elaine said quietly, "and secondly, although I may not be worth much, my own sympathy for any one in affliction."

"What do you know about trouble, you dainty child of luxury?" Daisy Gordon asked roughly. "If you had grovelled in the dirt of poverty, been crushed by adversity and made into a being unfit for the love of man you would perhaps then you might talk about sympathy."

Elaine turned her beautiful face towards her companion.

"Do I look like a happy person?" she asked simply.

In astonishment Daisy gazed into the delicate face. The great, deep eyes were surrounded by dark circles, there was a pensive droop to the rosebud lips, and she, whom all the world called happy, suddenly that she had suffered and still sorrowed.

"I am all have our secrets," Elaine said gently. "Usually a happy smile will power conceals mine. I let you see me, as no one usually sees me, because I think you may understand me. You seem to entertain a strange dislike for me."

Daisy walked along beside the white-clad figure for a few moments, then she suddenly broke out:

"Why? God in Heaven, can't you guess, girl?"

"No."

"Honest?"

"Really and truly, I cannot."

"Don't you know that you have won the love of the man who is my life?"

"Whom are you speaking of?"

"Senator Williams."

"No, no, he does not love me," Elaine cried shrinking back.

"He don't? Where are your eyes, girl? He adores you. So does Vernon Ellsworth. Senator Williams is worth ten of him."

"If you please, we will not pursue the subject," Elaine said with gentle dignity.

"And I will keep at it until I learn just how you stand on the question."

Elaine made no reply, but walked ahead, her little head haughtily reared, her blue eyes flashing.

"Who do you love?"

No answer.

"I say who do you love? Which man are you going to take?"

No answer.

"Do you hear me? Are you going to marry Vernon Ellsworth, or do you think you can secure Senator Williams?"

Elaine turned, her face white as her ermine fur, and said with a dignity which astounded the woman, so unusual is it in a young girl.

"Mrs. Gordon, you must pardon me if I ask you to leave me immediately."

"I won't leave you until you answer me."

"Then I will keep at it until I learn."

"I say will you tell me? I love that man with all my heart and soul. I would commit any crime for him, and you, you girl with a snip of a girl walk off with him, my reward."

Still no answer from the dainty little figure.

"I staked my all on him the other day, and lost, lost, but I'll win him yet! He owes me something, and I'll get it. He owes me have him," and she sparred like a wolf.

Elaine paused, her delicate scorn showing in every feature as she said:

"Why not take him then?"

"You dare to say it?" snapped the Ichbyist.

I am only asking a question, suggested by your rather rambling discourse," Elaine replied.

The woman was cut by the delicate irony, and her face was an ugly brick red. Her eyes, ordinarily protruding, looked unnatural, the veins bulged, and her full lips were drawn back from her strong, white teeth.

"Be careful," she warned, "such treatment before I have had the satisfaction of murder."

"I am not afraid," Elaine replied with a little laugh of contempt, "and I had been snowing again for some time, and for the moment the two had become completely hidden by the storm. They had reached the outskirts of the town, and there was not a sign of any about.

Never having controlled her temper, Daisy Gordon now found herself tempted beyond her strength. She loved Senator Williams, combined with her jealousy of this sweet, young girl, made of her for the moment a mad woman. With a cry, she caught Elaine by the arm hissing:

"You call me a coward, do you?"

"Release my arm, you hurt me," Elaine said with her gentle dignity.

"Hurt you, do I, you white-faced baby? I'll do more than hurt you before I am through. I'll show you whether Daisy Gordon is a coward or not. I've been raised in a barnyard; I've learned my lesson of life among the lowest of people; I have fire in my veins, fire to blaze into such a flame that it will extinguish you, you platter-faced hypocrite, trying with your babyish ways to win a man from the woman who wants him!" As she was speaking her hard, cruel hands, white, but not those of a lady, were clutching at Elaine's throat, and before she ended she had the slight figure in the snow, and was pressing against the tender flesh.

"You'll never again smile up at him as you sing your love songs, as I saw you last evening. I've ended all that for you. You red-headed fiirt, not contented with one of your kind, but determined to lure others into the hearts of others!"

She was a terrifying appearing creature as she knelt, her knee upon Elaine's gentle bosom, her fingers clutching at the fair throat, her eyes gloating at the expression of agony on the lovely face.

"Even in death, I have my revenge, for you will be ugly then, and instead of your lying in all your beauty, half covered by your golden hair, your coffin loaded down with flowers, on account of my fingers they will have to screw the lid on tight and bury the Governor's daughter to her grave! Thank God, within a few weeks nothing will remain of this white flesh but a mass of festering corruption. Speaking with worms! Then, my rival, what good will all the beauty have done you? Who then will think of you,

"Then you think?"

"I am awfully afraid."

"And she is worthy a better future," and the young man sighed deeply.

"Yet, most people would call it very brilliant," Winsome suggested, looking lovingly at the eager face of her lover, of whom she was so proud.

"Yes, for they do not read beneath the surface. Think, they will have nothing to work for. Their social position is assured. His talks of yachts and sailing around the world, and yet to them with all their wealth and luxury, life will be the same in China as it is in America. Darling, that is not life."

"It is not life as I want it," Winsome replied gently.

"I used to be a sentimental fellow years ago," Tom said, half laughing, drawing his sweetheart back upon the lounge on which they had been sitting, and taking her plump hand in his, "and I often thought of the wife in the future."

"Why, I see that a mop of chestnut hair and brown eyes?" Winsome asked merrily.

"I am afraid she was classically tall, with eyes of cornflower blue and a coronet of bright red hair," Tom replied laughing heartily.

"I have heard that men never marry their ideals," Winsome laughed back, pretending to pout.

"Fortunately for them."

"Why?"

"Because, sweet, their ideals are so nonsensical. Well, about this ideal I wound many a fancy, and among them was this—

"What? Tell me, Tom," Winsome whispered, nestling up to him in the sweet way she had, which made him love her more than ever if that was possible.

"I have never imagined myself a rich man, for I have never wanted riches. They tie a man down so and crush out his individuality."

"Like Vernon Ellsworth?"

"Yes, just like him. Without his money he would be a very fine fellow. With it, he is uninteresting."

"Yes, that expresses it, uninteresting," cried the girl whom the heir of millions had never given a second thought.

"I have always thought that when I won my wife that it would be my deepest pleasure to warm all her pleasures, as well as her necessities by my own hard work. That I could think when I was driving away at a thing, this is for a sealskin for my darling. If I pull off what I am aiming at, we can take that little trip we were talking about the other night. Real, true happiness comes when a man and his wife are so situated, to my mind. What pleasure can come to a wife from things which require no exertion aside from that of writing a check? When a woman knows that every garment she wears, the head she eats, her little pleasure, have been earned for her by his blood sweat, then she can be convinced of his adoration. Then, too, how can a man realize the true felicity of married life when there is nothing left for him to do? He can make no sacrifice for her, and upon sacrifices is built the true love edifice when everything has already been provided. Of course, he can keep up the temper and try to be pleasant and agreeable, but unfortunately with nothing to really live up to for a long time and interest, a man is likely to become disagreeable."

"How much you know, dear," Winsome whispered.

"I once worked as society editor, and I was horrified at the misery I found in homes crowded to the very doors with luxury. I found wives loaded down with everything but love. Love is a hothouse plant, darling. It has to have plenty of the warm, soft air of mutual interests; the hot sunshine of a tremendous passion and watered by the dew of continual sacrifice," and he paused, his face flushed, his eyes sparkling.

Winsome looked at him, her idol, and wondered if there was another man like him. For her there was not, but such men as Tom Bronson are not as rare as might be thought, and because there are plenty of them, America has grown to be the nation she has. A man laboring gladly, happily for his wife and family, cannot help but be a good citizen, and an upright, honorable man.

"Poor little girl, I bore you," he whispered, but Winsome said earnestly:

"Don't ever think that Tom. I love to have you talk. I can appreciate although I can't always reply in the same way. No matter what may come to us, I will be the happiest woman in the world in helping inspired the love of such a man as you, and Elaine, as the pampered wife of Vernon Ellsworth or even a queen, cannot make me envious in any way, for I will have you."

Little wonder that Tom was happy. If his heart had not responded to such words as these, he would have been very different from his own, tender, loyal self.

However, happy as they were, the outside world was bound to intrude, and as he was trying to tell her how he appreciated her affection, there was a knock on the door, and before it Winsome found her mother trembling with excitement.

"Oh folks," she cried, "Elaine is missing. She is lost."

"Lost, Elaine?" Winsome cried, her face turning deathly white.

"Lost," her mother repeated.

"Go, Tom," Winsome cried, and the young man, with a hasty kiss rushed out, while Winsome and her mother sat by the window, gazing sorrowfully out into the blinding storm, wondering, hoping, and then despairing.

CHAPTER XIII.

DEATH'S CLOSE SUMMONS.

It was a very anxious little party which was added to almost every minute, that searched for sweet Elaine, who had endeared herself to everyone.

Having seen that the storm had so increased, the Governor had regretted sending his daughter out into it, and ordering his closed carriage, had gone after her. Reaching the house of suffering, he was astounded to find that she had not been there, and returning, searched carefully for the white-clad figure, but unsuccessfully. Driving back like mad, he summoned others to help him, and the whole town was aroused.

"Elaine Leighton is lost!" flew from mouth to mouth, and one by one the men assembled. Senators and Legislators who had never handled a shovel swung into line, bearing implements of all kinds from a regular snow shovel to a simple spade.

Senator Williams heard it among the last, for he had been closeted with his stenographer, preparing several bills he wanted introduced the following day, but when he heard, he left a sentence unfinished, and dashed down stairs and out into the storm, the heaviest in years, bareheaded and without his coat. Some one, he knew not who, brought him hat and coat to him, and he put them on automatically. Somehow he obtained a shovel, and setting off ran like a professional to join the others.

How he thanked his God for his old experience in hard work. He would find his darling if he laid down his life. He saw many faces, but he could not speak to any. The Governor was almost frantic, his noble head bowed, his clear eyes clouded with grief.

To the terrified father Senator Williams could speak, and going up to him, he laid one of his strong, capable hands upon the shivering shoulder, saying in his full, deep tones:

"We'll find her, John," and the Governor, grasping his hand, said earnestly:

"If any one can find her, Beth, you are the man."

How the spirit of remorse gnawed at

"I have murdered and I glory in my act."

Senator Williams' heart, no one knew, as he forged ahead, leading the others. Once before, when he was but a youth, he had led such a search. He felt a terrible fear steadying over him. On account of his sin, was he to lose this dainty flower, the girl he so adored, that to see her happy, he would cheerfully give her to another to whom he deemed would make her so, and no man can do more than that? Would they give up his life without a murmur to save a woman, but when he is willing to give her up in the love of another, then he truly shows his nobility.

On and on, the earnest workers went, over the road trodden so short a time before by Elaine and her sinister companion, but there was no trace, until upon the very scene of the terrible struggle, they found little Elaine.

Senator Williams felt all the strength go out of him when he saw it the Governor broke down and cried as he had not since a boy; Vernon Ellsworth dropped almost lifeless in the snow, and others were horrified.

Suddenly Senator Williams sprang to his feet.

"Boys," he thundered, "this shows that she has been here. We must find her, for here is a part of her," and carrying the little hat, thrust inside his coat, he worked like a demon.

Again he struck something, and kneeling, he found a crimson muffler, which he managed to hide in his pocket. From his lips came great oaths, such as had never been formed by them before. To him alone the secret tragedy was revealed. He knew the nature of Daisy Gordon, and realized that it was at her hands that Elaine had met foul play.

"She'll pay for this!" he muttered, and words doggedly ahead. Somehow that muffler, breathing the strong perfume that Daisy Gordon always affected, brought home to the Senator a crushing conviction that they would never find their darling alive.

"She has killed her!" rung in his ears, and he felt a hope coming at his eyes and realized that he was staggering. How much longer he would have been able to endure the strain he was never able to tell, but suddenly there broke in upon their awful misery, the high, shrill voice of a man, asking:

"Are you looking for a young lady? I can't see through the snow!"

"My God, yes, do you know anything?" cried Senator Williams, catching at something through the heavy flakes, he being in the advance.

"I found her," came the welcome words from the line of a dried-up old man, but still full relief had not yet come.

"Quick, how is she?" the Senator thundered.

"Don't crush my arm," complained the man, "she's living, and it was a close call."

Hustling the man between them, the Governor, the Senator, Vernon and Tom rushed ahead, and a minute later were within a broken-down little shack, and there, upon an untenable bed lay Elaine, pure as the snow outside, but with her white neck bared and upon it the disfiguring marks of cruel fingers. Her eyes were open, but there was no reason in them, and the Governor felt a pang, no one but himself could understand, as he bent over her.

"My darling little girl," he whispered, but she only laughed wildly, and cried:

"The snow, the snow, it is like some great bird shedding its feathers about me! I hate feathers! They fill my mouth! I am choking! Put it off! Put it off! What is it? Is it the wonderful Dove which the old John the Baptist? No, no, take it away, I am too young to die!"

Her words trailed away, the fire burned higher in her blue eyes, and she put up her tiny hands to her throat with its awful marks, whispering:

"No, no, do not do it! Why should you kill me? I have not harmed you!"

A physician forced his way to the bedside, and knelt, taking one fluttering hand in his, and arguing his experienced fingers upon the madly throbbing pulse.

"We must get her back at once," he said in his low, professional tone.

"A carriage is here," the Governor replied.

The physician looked about the room, then said abruptly:

"Senator, you are the strongest. Carry her out. Here, wait, bring in all the robes," and skillfully he wrapped her up, then followed the stalwart Senator as he easily lifted the little figure and carried the girl to the waiting carriage.

The physician ordered him to help sup-

(Continued on page eleven.)

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Kleptomaniacs will take almost anything except a joke.

A boy in the schoolroom is worth a dozen in the poolroom.

If you would make your friends smile let your money talk.

The severest strain on politeness is to step down and out gracefully.

If some artists see things as they paint them they should quit drinking.

Some regular preachers put people to sleep, but an evangelist wakes them up.

Don't sit down and think about what you would do if you could live your life over. Get busy and improve the rest of it.

And when you hear a man boast of his shrewdness it's safe to bet that his descendants will have no occasion to boast of theirs.

Senator Foraker's name is given in a list of Presidential possibilities sent out from Washington, but we venture that the man who gave it out did not do it after a long heart-to-heart talk with the people.

Mention has been made of the fact that Mr. Rockefeller is able now, for the first time in thirty years, to eat and digest mince pie. Thirty years ought to be sufficient advice should enable him to make a meal of fish hooks.

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At the present rate of speed, without making allowance for the growth of the country's population, it will take only a little over 1,000 years for the "simplified" spelling to become the prevailing system. Let us take courage, and wait.

One of the theories advanced by San Franciscans to account for the unusually cold weather along the Pacific Coast this winter is that the earthquake of last year threw the Japanese current out of its regular course. A shock of some kind also seems to have turned aside the warm current of Japanese friendship from that locality.

An absconding banker from Sedan, Kas., was obliged to work as a laborer after he had merrily skipped and in his new employment, as we are assured by the correspondent, suffered untold hardships. Bottled magic in the Southwest do not keep banking hours and do not have some one to bring the ice water when the touch the button. He soon discovered that it is better to try to live moderately as a banker than to strive for luxurious ease as a lumber roustabout.

BLUEBELL'S SECRET

Or, The Man on the Roof.

By T. C. HARBAUGH.

Author of "Robespierre," San Francisco Sorceress," and "Alice of Maryland."

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Begun in No. 1, Jan. 5. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from newsstands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE EMBASSY GARDEN.

Hatfield Jessup strolled out of one of the most noted hotels of Washington a few nights after the duel in the little wood near the Capitol and proceeded to light a cigar.

He did not see the man who kept in the shadow of a tree and who regarded him with more than passing interest.

This personage did not lost track of the quarry until he had run him down some distance from the Jessup home.

Jessup was out for more than a mere stroll, for he was dressed for full function of some sort, and shortly after quitting the hotel he stood under the lights of the Italian embassy.

The young Countess Passetti was giving a party to one of the newspapermen and the large house was ablaze with lights.

Jessup was cordially received by the beauty of the season who looked fairer than ever, and who at once led him away so as to have him all to herself at least in her power to bring him out of his abstraction.

The secluded spot to where she led Jessup, was a superb garden connected with the house, a garden that had been the scene of many a delightful entertainment, and there, under some palms secluded from the brilliant lights, he was ushered by the count.

Jessup was a little paler than usual and looked perturbed, his merriment seemed to have left him, and he was not at least in her power to bring him out of his abstraction.

Suddenly she turned upon as she looked up into his handsome face:

"I have lately learned, my dear friend, of the little episode in the woods."

Jessup started and gave her a little stare.

"It could not be helped, Countess, when one is cruelly insulted by one who has been a mere acquaintance for four years he must seek the only redress afforded."

"Yes. But who is this Mr. Montford? Where does he come from?"

"He is a Virginian. I believe he saw some service in the late unpleasantness, but upon my honor he is but an adventurer with whom, perhaps I should not have fought, for he will never be missed, and by which he was doubtless seeking."

"You were deceived, I trust?"

A sinister smile for a moment illumined Jessup's face.

"Fortunately, the aim of the rascal was poor."

"Good! He was wounded, I hear."

"Yes. My ball scarred him for life and that it did not kill is my only regret."

The fair being drew back and cast an admiring look at her companion.

"Think you he will challenge you again?" she asked eagerly.

"I think he has had enough of it. Such men are at heart cowards and the drawing of a little blood is quite sufficient to cool their ardor."

"I have heard—but one hears so much nowadays—that you are a duelist and backed by his championing of a woman's cause."

"It may be true," replied Hal, "but not inquire into the fool's business."

Inez Passetti was silent for a moment.

It was evident to Jessup that her visit to Crestwood had failed of its dark intentions. She must have believed that she had failed to take the life of Bluebell, that the girl had miraculously escaped the dagger aimed at her heart.

"You have dropped the Virginian matter, but you will not be so easily managed in Maryland. "You go not back there any more?"

"Why should I?" inquired Jessup. "Need I have such a friend as yourself, Countess, why should I seek to bask in the light of a lesser star?"

The smile he got for his words infatuated him.

The hopes of the Italian beauty rose and fell with pendulum.

"I am glad," she said, leaning toward Jessup. "It gives me great delight to know that there is left to me a champion such as the woman of Virginia."

"There is absolutely nothing between us."

"Then you have sent her release?"

"That was not necessary—I have not been to the plantation since that night. Is not that enough?"

Just then a slight noise fell upon the ears of the lovers and Jessup started to his feet.

The Countess Passetti rose as well and looked at him while he went down the path and was lost to sight.

In a moment he came back, his face a shade whiter and his eyes aglow with excitement.

"A spy!" asked the Countess with a little trembling fear.

"Some lurking fool," said Jessup. "But he is gone now."

"I must see to this. We admit no such persons. These grounds are private. I will have them searched."

"It is not necessary, I assure you," and the hand of Jessup fell restrainingly upon Passetti's arm. "It is all over now. Shall we return to the house?"

"In a moment. Is this Virginian so beautiful?"

"She can not surpass you, my dear. No one can."

How the dark eyes of the fair Italian sparkled at this compliment.

In their depths awoke every dream of love and Jessup stooped and kissed the radiant face upturned to him.

"You must give her formal release!" cried the woman. "You must tell this girl outright that you will not hold her to the love bargain once made with her."

"I will do so, my love."

"You must do it at once! She may come to Washington and—Carissima! I cannot think of that."

"Have no fears on that score," answered Jessup. "She will not quit Crestwood."

"And this man Montford?"

"Oh, he has gone home nursing his wound and to bring up again, if he can, the few acres left him by his parents and ruined by the war."

There was still a fear in the woman's eyes despite Jessup's assurances.

"If I thought, my dear——" cried Passetti. I have not, for a moment that this creature might elect to come to Washington to come between us. I would take the plan of the Carbonari of my own land."

"And that is——"

"Death!" almost hissed the beautiful woman. "It is the law of Italy, the secret law of revenge."

"We do not need it in this country," said Jessup.

"It is needed sometimes even here," and the thoughts of the Countess went back to the night in the forest where she had thought she had left Bluebell dead on the ground under her feet.

"We will go into the house now," she said, dropping back to the sweetness of her tones, "and you will write the paper of this girl's release. It must be done at once."

Jessup felt that the victory had been won, there is coming an hour of Justice!" and with this purpose in mind and the fear of the garden, passing to the street through a private gate which she found unlocked.

CHAPTER XIV.

FOUND OUT.

The woman who had entered the garden of the Italian embassy and spied upon the pair among the palms made her way down the street and at last entered a moderate looking house, ascended a flight of stairs to a little room where she lit a lamp.

Then for the first time she threw off the cloak that hid her features, her face and stood revealed as Bluebell of Crestwood!

The girl had come to Washington in the girl's eyes; she was pale and trembling, but for a moment she smiled and threw herself into a chair.

Quietly she had left the plantation letting no one into her secret, even Aunt Dinah, and proceeded to Washington for a purpose.

She had not been long in a woman, who during the war had moved to the capital for the purpose of secretly giving aid and comfort to the Confederacy, and it was to her house she was made her way to receive a warm welcome and to stay for as long as she cared to remain in the city.

Her first few hours at the capital were spent in getting settled, and then she told her friend, and, having learned of the party at the Italian embassy, managed to bribe a servant who had let her into the garden, bringing that in time Hatfield Jessup and the Countess Passetti would stroll to its quiet nooks.

That she was not deceived, as the reader knows, and, having overheard their conversation, it required but little retreat.

Bluebell looked to longer the Union girl of the old plantation; the rose had left her cheeks, and she appeared on the stage once as a nemesis, one who had a purpose to accomplish.

For a little while she remained in the dark receiving after her somewhat exciting experience, but at length, and just as she heard footsteps on the stair just beyond were the door she rose and waited.

A little rap came to her ears.

"Come in," said the girl.

Mrs. Robeson, for it was, entered with an enigmatical smile on her ntatronly face.

"Here, my dear," said she, "is that you expected no visitors, that your coming to Washington was totally unknown?"

"So it is."

"There is a gentleman below who wishes to see you."

"To see me? At this hour!" exclaimed Bluebell, startled, and then wondering if she had been tracked from the garden.

"That is what he says."

"Who is he?"

"He persisted in hiding his face from me and succeeded so well that my description would not do him justice."

Bluebell hesitated for a moment. Then her face seemed to lose some of its pallor as she said;

"Tell me him," she said to Mrs. Robeson. "You will let him come up."

The lady withdrew and in a few seconds Bluebell heard a heavier footfall on the stair and her door opened again.

There was a little cry as she recognized

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the person who entered and stood just beyond the threshold bowing to her with a strange look in his eyes.

"You!" cried the girl. "I did not know you were in the city. I thought you were at Pinehurst—"

"One need not remain there all the time," was the interruption. "I trust you will pardon this intrusion, but what have you done, Bluebell?"

The speaker was Ray Montford.

"You see me in Washington?"

"Yes, and there begins the new mystery."

"It is so terribly strange!" cried Bluebell, advancing toward him. "You did not give me a secret. But I have discovered it. You fought him."

"Yes. I have met the greatest scoundrel on earth—a man that exposes a coat of mail," Bluebell was silent.

"I need not tell you how I discovered your whereabouts," he went on. "But you see I have found you."

"The people at Crestwood did not know—"

"I did not go to Crestwood, but came directly to this city."

"And tracked me—"

"There was a flash of indignation in Bluebell's eyes, but it did not remain long.

"I did not have to track you," said Montford with a little laugh. "There is one person you had not reckoned on."

Bluebell looked puzzled.

"Why not tell me?" she asked. "If it is not too great a secret, your duties me—"

"You know Yellow Dick?"

"What!" cried the girl, with a start. "Is he in the city?"

"Yellow Dick is here."

"And you found him?"

"Yes, after he had discovered your quarters."

"The secret is out then," laughed the girl. "Now, Mr. Montford, what is your purpose?"

"You have come to Washington for a purpose of your own," said the young soldier. "You are in real danger here. How do I know?"

Bluebell did not speak.

"In the first place, the Countess Passetti has been to Crestwood, where she found evidence of that visit. Whilst you are here you are in danger. That woman counts you her rival."

"Which I am not," broke in the Virginian girl, with a smile on one's rival."

"But you cannot convince Inez Passetti to the contrary. She fully believes it. Those papers are dangerous when a rival stands in their path."

"Say you so?" and Bluebell's eyes again lit up with a defiant flash. "I can bring to naught all her love plans. I can break the spell of her witchery—"

"By holding Hatfield Jessup to his promise?"

"No! I will not think of that. Though I am still betrothed I will exact nothing from him. I know the man."

"I heard you!" chuckled Montford and he lost like taking the girl into his arms and covering her white brow with kisses.

"But you have a purpose," continued Bluebell. "If did not quit Crestwood in such a secret manner. I have a thinking cap. I am in Washington for a few days and when I quit it the game will have been played through."

"Then you will give up your secret, the one that relates to the one on the night of the crime?"

"Let time tell," answered Bluebell. "I seem to have grown in many ways since that night. I am no longer a mere girl. Vengeance has put a terrible weapon into my hands."

"Let the law use it," said Montford. "If you know—"

"I do know," interrupted Bluebell. "What I saw that night has never left my memory."

"To be loved by a creature like the Countess is not reciprocation enough," he said. "She loves to destroy."

"To compass the dead. You forget the crime of the wedding night."

"I forget nothing," he replied. "But I would not have you transform yourself into a heroine, making your fair hand the wield-er of a dagger when the law can punish and avenge."

"I wield no dagger!" cried Bluebell. "This hand will never use the knife to avenge the dead. I am not a murderess, Ray."

"You do not look it," he said.

"Thank you. Now let me have my way. Not for a moment has the man on the roof been out of my mind. Let me keep the secret awhile longer. Methinks I hear you say that you can guess it. Perhaps you can, but it is my secret all the same."

CHAPTER XV.

THE WOMAN IN THE SHADOWS.

Inez Passetti, the beauty of the capital, was enraged when she discovered that her clandestine visit to Crestwood had failed of its terrible purpose.

She knew that it had failed by she had watched the house closely and they continued no report of a murder in Virginia. Why had she failed? Surely she had struck with a keen and a swift, obedient hand. She had driven the dagger straight at Bluebell's breast and was at a loss to find why its point had been turned aside.

She was determined to win Jessup, even at the expense of a pure girl's life, and her Italian nature filled her heart with the darkest schemes of vengeance.

After her interview with her lover in the grounds of the embassy, she left him standing in vein of thinking.

True, Jessup had promised that he would at once release Bluebell from the engagement, but she knew man so well, knew that they are deceptive and feared that he might desert her for the beauty of the Old Dominion.

This fear troubled her walking thoughts and she dreamed of being cast adrift by him when she had reached the very pinnacle of her intense passion.

"He must not escape me!" she cried in the solitude of her luxurious boudoir. "I love him with all the strength of my nature and I will forever be unhappy without him. That young chit of a girl must not balk me. I would die if she should do so. But, she does not know who visited her that night—but what if she should suspect?"

Here the beautiful creature paused and turned a shade paler.

She walked the carpet of her chamber with the quick, silent tread of a tiger-cat.

Now she would pause for a moment at the window and look out upon the street, then she would resume her strides, her eyes flashing out mingled hate and love, only at last to stop at her elaborate inlaid dresser and take out the dagger again.

"I must try again," said she under her breath. "I must make sure of it this time."

Again she was at her window and suddenly she started back.

A cry leaped to her lips.

An agony was added to the white opposite embassy.

It was the slight, yet graceful figure of a young girl, plainly dressed.

The deep, expressive eyes were fastened on the embassy and the face of their owner for a second stood out in full view.

"It is she! I remember the face I saw for a moment in the dim light of the grove that night!" exclaimed Inez. "It is engraved on the tablet of my memory and nothing can erase it. She is in the city! What has brought her? Bluebell! Well, but a resolution to hold Hatfield to his promise—to rob me of him!"

The face was shot forth scintillations from her heart, she clinched her white hands till the delicate nails bruised the palms; she fell back staggeringly for a moment, then again gazed at the window.

Bluebell was gone.

The Virginian girl was just taking a glance at the mansion where another Inez lived, and, having satisfied her curiosity, had passed on, then—

"I will follow her!" cried the Countess. "I will doo her footsteps. I will find out how she is here and then—"

The blood leaped through her veins like fire once more, and she smiled.

"She shall not escape me! I am a Carbonaro from the mountains of Calabria. I have found a resting place in her bosom where her heart beat as it had never beat before."

Like another creature of the night Bluebell hastily for the street and flitted from the house.

Rushing to the pavement she sent eager glances in both directions and at last started to the right.

To find Bluebell, to dog her footsteps, to run her down, was the one thought that now filled her soul.

But she paused on a street some distance from the spot where the building of the embassy stood.

Before her walked a sylph-like figure to the street; she had found the Virginia girl.

Unconscious of the fact espionage, Bluebell had made her way back to Mrs. Robeson's.

If she had looked for a moment she had caught sight of her pursuer.

But she had no idea that Inez Passetti was in the city, much less that such a dagger was again in search of her heart.

Entering the house she went to her little room and sat down.

She wondered what had become of Ray Montford.

The days of the past, the happy days before the war, when she and the children together came back to her. He had come often to Crestwood; they had played together in the sunshine of guileless youth and he had been her "little husband" on many occasions.

That he should love her, now that he had reached manhood, was a mere girlish fancy Bluebell thought of this.

He had proved his worth, he had been a soldier, fighting for the flag of his choice through the war and, acquiescing in the result of the strife, had come back with his heart to do so, he had taken up the old friendship again and was trying to recruit his fortunes.

The day lengthened into the shades of evening.

Bluebell stole out at the house, it was closed and the girl walked slowly down the street.

She had promised herself that she would take a little stroll around the trees before retiring, and the air would do her good.

In a few minutes she was a short distance from the house.

The city was unknown to her. She knew nothing of its streets, nothing of its devious ways, now beautiful a scenery, but she would not venture out in a short time would be back refreshed by her walk.

All at once the girl caught sight of a figure that crept down the pavement.

It was a woman, and she, too, stood as the tiger creeping upon its prey in the heart of the jungle.

As it came nearer Dick made out the figure to be that of a woman.

The unknown was a stranger. Mrs. Robeson's abode stood dark behind the shelter-ing trees.

Not a muscle yet had stirred in the mulatto's anatomy.

He did not lose sight of the woman for a second. He saw her approach the house and then pass on beyond the steps.

Then for the first time Dick moved.

The cat was watching the mouse; the beast of the jungle prepared to creep forward as if ready for a clutch.

The woman passed on to the first sound he had heard. It was the jingle of a bunch of keys.

He heard the woman insert one key in the lock of the door, then another and another, until at last a low exclamation of satisfaction escaped her lips.

She turned and faced the back of the portal and then Dick left his ambush.

So noiseless was his movement that the eager woman on the step did not hear him.

She did not know that he was near until she felt a hand grip her arm, and turning she made out the triumphant face that almost touched hers.

She drew back with a little cry which Dick stifled with a low muttered oath.

"Who are you?" fell from the woman's

(Continued on page fifteen.)

"Back home, Dick," and with self assurances of safety, the girl placed herself under Dick's protection.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WOMAN WHO CAME.

Yellow Dick piloted Bluebell down a little side street almost as dark as an alley, and the girl followed on and on until they, at last, came out in another street some distance from the scene of their meeting.

"I am lost now," said the girl, looking up into Dick's face. "I cannot tell where I am."

"Dick knows," smiled the ex-slave. "He has found your nest, Miz Bluebell."

Suddenly the girl stopped and looked her companion in the face. Up till then she had not asked about the woman in the shadows.

"Who was following me, Dick?" she asked. "Can't you guess, Miz Bluebell?" said Yellow Dick. "Think who would follow you in dis city."

"I can have but one enemy here," was the reply. "I can think of but one person who would dog my footsteps."

That was dat one."

"The Italian countess?"

"De woman what lost dis at Crestwood," and Dicky produced a silver bin pocket an elegant card-case at which the girl stared till she seemed to lose breath.

"I had it in my dresser," said she at last. "I found it in the grove at Crestwood."

Dick showed his teeth in a grin, during which he answered not for a moment.

"I stole dis from yo' room dat night," he confessed. "I hope you will pahdon me, Miz Bluebell. I wanted some money ter leave de place fo'ever an' as I couldn't jes' find it, I took dis. I knowed dat de lady meant thing fer do. I know, but—"

"But how did you know that the card-case belongs to the woman who would injure me in this city?"

"Dat's de trick," was the reply. "He may not want ter tell all he knows."

"Very well," was the reply by the Countess."

"Be the swell girl of de capital."

"And that was she at my heels tonight?"

Dick gave one of his emphatic nods.

"I think so, Miz," and Bluebell with a shudder. "If you will take me home—"

"Dat jes' what I'se gwine ter do. You're not safe after dark on dese streets, Miz' Bluebell."

The girl from Virginia more than ever gratefully accepted Dick's escort and in a few minutes more the night of Mrs. Robeson's domicile.

"Dick, you will take tracked me down before this," said she as she turned to the mulatto. "Inez Passetti may have discovered my retreat."

"Dat's so. She has keen eyes, dat Italyun. She may come tonight."

"She may come again tonight."

"Dick will be on de watch, Miz Bluebell."

"And get arrested by the suspicious police of Washington!"

"Dat's true Dick fo' dat," smiled the man. "Him no fool if he war raised down in ole Virginny."

With this Bluebell thanked the ex-slave for his good work and slipped into the house.

How narrow again had been her escape from this same creature who still wanted her life!

Again she had been miraculously preserved from the dagger of the jealous woman and she could thank Yellow Dick for it.

Half unnerved by the events of the night, Bluebell threw herself on the bed and after awhile sank into a dreamless slumber.

She knew nothing of the nerves after their strain. She lay like one in the sleep of death and but for the scarcely perceptible movement of her bosom, she might have been taken for one ready for the grave.

Down below, silence could not be secured, crouched the yellow guard.

He was a watch-dog unbush itself. His figure did not move a muscle. His keen eyes looked up and down the street and he was ready for a spring or a signing or a leap.

Midnight came and passed.

Yellow Dick saw nothing suspicious. Now and then a car would pass, passers-by, near at times that he could have touched him by putting out his hand.

At last one o'clock struck and turned his head.

A vehicle had stopped a few rods away and the mulatto had observed instantly for he knew it was a strange place for a carriage to stop at that hour.

A few minutes of silence followed and Dick kept on the alert.

Presently he caught sight of a figure that crept down the pavement.

It was a woman and she, as silent as the tiger creeping upon its prey in the heart of the jungle.

As it came nearer Dick made out the figure to be that of a woman.

The unknown was a stranger. Mrs. Robeson's abode stood dark behind the sheltering trees.

Not a muscle yet had stirred in the mulatto's anatomy.

He did not lose sight of the woman for a second. He saw her approach the house and then pass on beyond the steps.

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She drew back with a little cry which Dick stifled with a low muttered oath.

"Who are you?" fell from the woman's

(Continued on page fifteen.)

DON'T BE FAT.

My New Obesity Reducer Quickly Changes Your Weight to Normal, Requires No Starvation Process and is Absolutely Safe,

TRIAL PACKAGE MAILED FREE.

The Above Illustration Shows the Remarkable Effects of This Wonderful Obesity Reducer. What It Has Done For Others It Will Do For You.

My new Obesity Reducer, taken at mealtime, corrects perfect assimilation of the food and sends the food nutriment where it belongs. It requires no starvation process, you can eat all you want. It makes muscle, bone, sinew, nerve and brain tissue and quickly reduces your weight to normal. It takes off the big stomach and relieves the oppressed condition, and enables the heart to act freely and the lungs to expand naturally and the kidneys and liver to regulate their functions in a natural manner. You will feel better the first day you take Wonderful Home food. Fill out coupon herewith and mail today.

FREE

This coupon is good for one trial package of Kellogg's Obesity Reducer, sent postpaid from hundreds who have been greatly reduced, mailed free in plain wrapper. Simply fill in your name and address on dotted line below and mail to

F. J. KELLOGG, 4058 Kellogg Bldg., Battle Creek, Mich.

10 COLORED POSTALS, Frosted, Love Scenes, Trimp't and Santa Floats, Etc. Postal Art Co., Wall Street, Cleve.

$300 Genuine Cox Cabinets money for $1. $100 for $10. RAMSEY, 1 Nassau St., New York.

SYNDICATE STOCK, starting interest 5½ per cent. Write for booklet. Wall street facilities. Wells, Postal Block, Room 1, 182 Fulton st., New York.

TO EVERY READER OF THIS AD.: Send 2c stamp for 3 months' trial of weekly with name and address. I will send them a Star Soothsayer. Address F. H. GARDNER, CORTESTOWN, NO. 918.

Morphine AND OTHER DRUG HABITS

cured to stay cured. Thousands restored to perfect manhood and womanhood. Book sent free. Confidential. Dr. Kellogg, 429 Elliott Square, Buffalo, N. Y.

Globe Incubators

hatch sure while you sleep. Fine Poultry Supplies. Send for Catalogue. Globe Incubator & Poultry Supplies Co., C. C. Shoemaker & Co., Mgrs., Freeport, Ill.

Chatham Incubator

Big Incubator Book Free. Don't Buy Incubator or Brooder before you get our Big Free Catalog. Tells How Kansas Compared Corn, Oats, Wheat and Alfalfa. Tells How and Where One saved the Wonderful Money. Freight Paid. Write Today.

Gold Watch FREE AND RING

Given for selling 20 packages Bluine at 10c each. Solid Gold Plated case with 7 jewel movement. Solid Gold Filled Watch. Fully warranted to any watch man. Send your name and address and we will send you the Bluine to sell. When sold send us the $2, and we positively will send the watch and ring by return mail. Address BLUINE MFG. CO., DEPT. 37, CHICAGO.

MEN WANTED RAILROADS

The demand for our Firemen and Brakemen exceeds the supply. Greater than we can supply. Will prepare you in 60 days and assist you to a position at $75 a month. No vacancy for a position guaranteed. Write for free booklet and testimonials from those who have secured positions. Name this paper. The Wenzle Railway Correspondence School, Box 918 Freeport, Ill.

USE THE OLIVER TYPEWRITER

THE STANDARD VISIBLE WRITER

Write for Art Catalogue. 24

No. 166-168 Wabash Ave. CHICAGO

When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

JOKES AND

Change of Heart.

First Female Advocate—What? Do you mean to say Mrs. De Sweet has resigned from the Woman's Rights Society, and says she has all the rights she wants?

Second Female Advocate—Just so.

F. F. A.—Mercy me! What has happened?

S. F. A.—I'm sure I don't know. Johnny! Have you seen Mrs. De Sweet lately?

Little Johnny—No, ma'am, but as I was passin' her house this mornin' I saw a furniture wagon stop and unload a cradle.

Widely Advertised Brand.

Hicks—What do you suppose my wife has been doing now?

Wicks—I don't know.

Hicks—Why, she told me last night that she went all over town the week before my birthday, trying to buy me some post-prandial cigars. She said that she had read about them in the newspapers.

Vera—Captain Corocodile didn't know until after he had married Cynthia that she had a wooden leg.

Clytie—What's he done about it?

Vera—O, he's insured her against fire.

Peril Only in Descending.

"See here," feebly complained the victim after the accident, "I thought you said it was perfectly safe to go up in that old elevator?"

"Well," replied the elevator man, "so it was safe to go up; you see, the dangerous part of it was comin' down."

Guarding a Secret.

Senior Clerk—How is it you never take a holiday? The boss could get along without you all right.

Junior Clerk—I know, but I don't want him to find it out.

Not the Eternal.

"Dresses and hats! dresses and hats!" we exclaimed, in an effort to be wittily philosophical. "It is the eternal feminine."

"No," corrected our exact friend; "it is the eternal feminine."

Martyr.

The multi-millionaire was in great agony when he found he would probably be compelled to die rich.

"Money," he exclaimed, pitcously; "nothing but money! Is it not a punishment?"

"Yes," replied the beggar at the gate, "and I call it capital punishment. Suppose you give me your wealth and die a happy man?"

But the multi-millionaire shook his head.

"No," he answered doiefully. "When a man is condemned to capital punishment he generally deserves it, so I will take my medicine like a man."

And then he called out his $10,000 bulldogs and drove the beggar off the premises.

Too Much to Expect.

Toy Jobber—Seems to me your charge for "liquor for customers" is enormous.

Traveling Salesman—You sent me on the road with a great lot of Christmas toys and Christmas tree ornaments?

Toy Jobber—Certainly.

Traveling Salesman—Well, you don't suppose a drummer can sell people Christmas things in July without getting them drunk, do you?

One of Many.

Mr. De Dude—Cawn't I intwoduce to you my fwiend Arthur Wemington? He is a litewawy man, you know.

Miss De Belle—Indeed!

Mr. De Dude—Aw, yes. He sent the Society News a list of the guests at the last pahty, and the editah accepted it, bah Jove!

Greedy Girl.

Stella—I hear Maude is going to be married to a widower with six children.

Mabel—I'm not at all surprised. She always was a greedy thing.

Friend—Isn't it lovely to have a husband that writes such lovely poetry? Can you help him in his work?

Mrs. Rhymer—Oh, my, yes! I make the living by washing.

Ladies, Preserve Your Youthful Appearance.

Madame Mignette's Beauty Cream and Skin Food removes every defect, spot, freckle, pimple, blemish or wrinkle, leaving the skin soft, clear and smooth. It is perfectly harmless and will not injure the most delicate skin. It preserves and brings back the youthful glow to the face and ruddiness to the cheeks, preserving it in this condition until extreme old age. This preparation has been used for years and hundreds are now using it and are more than delighted with the results.

Send us ten (10) cents for formula which you can have filled at any drug store at a very small cost. Do not delay, but write at once. Box 491, Blairsville, Pa.

A Solid Fog.

They were seated on the cracker-barrels and soap-boxes in the village grocery in an Oakland County town swapping yarns.

"I saw a fog on the Pacific Coast," said one, "which was so thick that you couldn't see a lantern six inches away!"

"Pshaw!" said a native. "Hi Jinks, the carpenter, tells of goin' out to shingle a house one foggy mornin' right in this town an' shingin' four feet out on the bosom of the fog before he noticed his mistake. Made hi terrible angry to waste an hour rippin' off all them shingles!"

Why They Are Sorry.

"The Wiggles are going to move out of this neighborhood after being here just a year."

"That's strange. All the people are just getting to know them."

"Yes; that's the reason they're going."

Unpopular, Indeed.

Stubb—And is he really so unpopular?

Penn—Unpopular? Why, he is as unpopular as "simplified spelling."

Looking For Work.

"Well, what do you want?" said the master of the house sternly to Dreary Samuel, the tattered tramp, as he stood outside the door, shivering with the most accomplished art.

"I'm lookin' for work," replied he of the unemployed brigade. "Haven't got no scrubbin' or washin' or cleanin' or nothink that no honest body could do."

This earnest appeal for work made the householder think that he had misjudged a real, honest laborer of work.

"Ah," he said, "now you speak like a man! I like to hear of any one willing to make an effort. I never thought you wanted work of that kind."

"No more I do," whined Samuel, shuddering at the bare idea; "it's work for my wife that I'm a-lookin' for!"

A Loss to Literature.

Mrs. Culture—I don't see what is the matter with the magazines. They used to be full of intensely interesting articles, but now they are dreadfully stupid.

Mr. Culture (an omnivorous newspaper reader)—I think it likely, my dear, that all the intensely interesting writers have been engaged by the patent medicine proprietors.

Science's New Remedy.

Doctor—What? Troubled with sleeplessness? Eat something before going to bed.

Patient—Why, doctor you once told me never to eat anything before going to bed.

Doctor (with dignity)—Pooh, pooh! That was last January. Science has made enormous strides since then.

A Lover Squelched.

"Ah! proud beauty!" exclaimed little Sniffkins, "you spurn my love now, but let me tell you, I will not always be a clerk—I——"

"That's so," interrupted the heartless girl, "you may lose your job."

Tommy—Let up, kids. Don't t'row any more snowballs at de couple in dat red sleigh.

Jimmy—Why not?

Tommy—'Cause it's a waste of snow. Dat pair are making love an' dey wouldn't feel cannon balls.

The Wedding Prelude.

Little Boy—Say, ma says you are going to take sister off.

Engaged Youth (soon to be married)—Yes, in a few weeks I am going to my home and my ma and pa will be her ma and pa, too.

Little Boy—I see. Then she'll be your sister, same as she was mine. Say, don't you do anything she doesn't like, for if you do she'll bang you around awful when your ma and pa ain't looking.

Henry's Big Job.

"Our Henry's doin' real well in town," said Mrs. Wayback proudly. "He's runnin' a hotel, now, an' it's a big one."

"Land's sake!" exclaimed Mrs. Kornlop.

"Yes. Got a letter from him this mornin', an' he says: 'I'm a hotel-runner now, an' it's a real swell place.'"

Long and Short of It.

Scribbles—Now that you have begun to write poetry I suppose you will wear your hair long.

Dribbles—I'll wear it as long as I can, but, of course, I expect to become bald sooner or later.

Truthful Tillie.

Nellie—So you are engaged to that awkward Jim Green! What on earth can you see in him?

Tillie—My last chance.

Prepared for Worst.

Professor—What would you give a person who had swallowed a large dose of arsenic?

Student—Extreme unction.

Time to Run.

Gunner—There was a bad, bold burglar in the girls' college the other day.

Guyer—You don't say. And did the girls yell?

Gunner—I should say so. They gave the college yell and the burglar hasn't stopped running yet.

CURE FOR LIQUOR AND TOBACCO.

The Kansas Anti-Liquor Society is mailing free a recipe for the cure of the liquor habit. It can be given secretly in food. Also one for the tobacco habit that can be given secretly. The only request they make is that you do not sell recipes, but give copies to friends. Address Kansas Anti-Liquor Society, 15 Gray Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

All the Same.

Street Car Conductor—Where do you want to get off at?

Drowsy Passenger—Minute street.

Street Car Conductor—Why, there's no such street in this line.

Drowsy Passenger—All right; let me off at 653 street.

Every Lady Read This.

Years ago when I was a sufferer, an old nurse told me of a wonderful cure for Leucorrhœa, Displacements, Painful Periods, Uterine and Ovarian troubles. It cured me in one month. It is a simple, harmless lotion that can be prepared by any one having the recipe. I will send it free to every suffering sister who writes to me. Address Mrs. A. Holand, South Bend, Indiana.

When He Gets Noisy.

Grace—Your cousin from the country is rather quiet. He doesn't have much to say.

Lois—No, he doesn't say much, but wait until you hear him eat.

JOLLITY

A DOCTOR'S SLEEP

Found He Had to Leave Off Coffee.

Many persons do not realize that a bad stomach will cause insomnia.

Coffee drinking, being such an ancient and respectable form of stimulation, few realize that the drug—caffein—contained in coffee and tea, is one of the principal causes of dyspepsia and nervous troubles.

Without their usual portion of coffee or tea, the caffeine topers are nervous, irritable and fretful. That's the way with a whiskey-drinker. He has got to have his dram "to settle his nerves"—habit.

To leave off coffee is an easy matter if you want to try it, because Postum—well boiled according to directions—gives a gentle but natural support to the nerves and does not contain any drug—nothing but food.

Physicians know this to be true, as one from Georgia writes:

"I have cured myself of a long-standing case of Nervous Dyspepsia by leaving off coffee and using Postum Food Coffee," says the doctor.

"I also enjoy refreshing sleep, to which I've been an utter stranger for twenty years.

"In treating Dyspepsia in its various types, I find little trouble when I can induce patients to quit coffee and adopt Postum." The doctor is right and "there's a reason." Read the little book, "The Road to Wellville," in pkgs.

Judge—And is there no chance for an agreement?

Foreman of the jury (rising)—Wasl, if your honor will give me back the gun that was took from me when we was locked up I reckon I kin bring these here eleven ornery critters to time in less than five minutes, but there ain't no chance for an agreement while I'm lackin' a strong argument.

He—That jolly Miss Smith is a girl after my own heart!

She—If you think that is all she is after you are foolish!

A Question of Art.

Guest (going over the picture gallery and halting before portrait)—And is this the old master?

Servant—No, sir; sure, that's the auld missus.

Luxury and Necessity.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what's the difference between a luxury and a necessity?

Pa—Marrying for love is a luxury, my son, while marrying for money is a necessity.

Gaining Self-Control.

"Your husband looks like a man of great self-control," remarked Mrs. Gadd to Mrs. Gabb.

"Well, he hadn't much when I married him," replied Mrs. Gabb, "but," she added, with a cold-steel look in her gray eye, "he's getting it."

Practical Side.

Mrs. A.—Men are so queer after the honeymoon. If you tell them your love is growing cold the brutes don't even glance up from their abominable papers.

Mrs. X.—No, but tell them the soup is growing cold and they jump about ten feet.

Colonel Pepper—I hear that Majah Blublud has been tracin' back his ancestry. I wondah if he got any good results.

Judge Ryemash—Most gratifyin' results, sah—most gratifyin'. While rummagin' up in the attic he found a barl o' fine old whisky that had been fohgotten for fohty yeahs, sah.

Fleece.

The bucket-shop broker came down the street in a tall silk hat and a four-carat pin.

"Gracious, what a change!" commented an old acquaintance. "The last time we met your trousers were frayed and your heels were run in. Make it all through sheer luck?"

"No, shear buck," he replied. "I have been shearing lambs."

One on Adam.

Adam felt remorseful after eating the fruit.

"Why did you hand me the apple?" he asked bitterly.

"Because," laughed Eve, tauntingly, "it wasn't convenient to hand you a lemon."

And Adam was so humiliated he went away on a fishing trip.

Janitor Philosopher.

"Wimmin do be queer creatures," said the janitor philosopher. "Whin they have wan trouble they always believe in increasing it to two."

"In what way?" asked the policeman.

"Why, whin they discover a new wrinkle they always frown over it until they get another wan."

Painful Suggestion.

Chapleigh—I was—ac—out late last night, and the—ac—result was I had a head on me this mawning, doncher know.

Miss Caustique—Well, if I were you I'd stay out late every night.

The Charge.

"Charge for the guns!" commanded the captain of industry, who was in the steel business.

And his bookkeeper did so with a vim.

Mysterics of Navigation.

Sweet Girl (in a riverboat)—What is this place in the back of the boat for?

Nice Young Man—That is to put an oar in when you want to scull the boat. Rowing requires both oars, one on each side, but in sculling only one is used. That is placed at the back and worked with one hand.

Sweet Girl (after meditating)—I wish you would try sculling awhile.

Oversight Somewhere.

"What is Sirius, pa?" asked little Bobby as he fingered an astronomical guide.

"Sirius is the dog star, my son," replied pa.

"The dog star! Then which is the cat star?"

"Why, there isn't any cat star."

"Well, there ought to be. Cats are out at night more than dogs."

One Objection.

Major—Have another bombshell peach, colonel. They are, indeed, delicious.

Colonel—I should say so, suh. They could only be improved by doing away with one thing.

Major—And what is that?

Colonel—The peaches, suh.

These Assumed Names.

Mrs. Mulhooly—An' phy did ye give the name av Standish at the police station?

Mr. Mulhooly—Sure, Oi was arristed fer bein' drunnk an' disorderly, an' it isn't me wud be disgracin' the name of Mulhooly.

Told in Confidence.

His Daughter—Papa, did you know mamma long before you married her?

Her Father—Just between you and me, my dear, I don't know her yet.

He—And will you be a partner with me in all life's troubles?

She (interrupting)—Yes, dear. I'll furnish all your troubles for you.

AGENTS WANTED

Nearly all the readers of THE LEDGER will find these advertisements of interest to them. There will be found among them some excellent chances of making money by selling goods to friends, neighbors and others. Those lacking such an opportunity either as a regular or temporary occupation, should write for the advertisers whose offers follow.

AGENTS

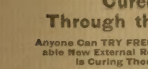
$100 A MONTH SURE SALARY paid men and women to introduce our NEW ELECTRIC TRANSFORMER. Handles pocket lighter. Needed in every home. Sells on sight. Write and address us on your letterhead and we will send you photo and larger circular, free. Hurry and address us on your letterhead and we will send you photo and larger circular, free. Hurry and address us on your letterhead and we will send you photo and larger circular, free. Hurry

RHEUMATISM
Cured
Through the Feet

Anyone Can TRY FREE this Remarkable New External Remedy which is Curing Thousands

SEND YOUR NAME TODAY

Don't take medicine for Rheumatism, but send to Jackson today for a trial pair of the new Magic Foot Drafts, the great Michigan external remedy for Rheumatism—chronic or acute—muscular, sciatic, lumbago, gout, etc., no matter where located or how severe. The Drafts will come by return mail, free and prepaid. Try them. Then if you are fully satisfied with the benefit received send us One Dollar. If not have only to say so. You decide.



Don't you want to try a pair on this free trial offer? Then send your address to Magic Foot Draft Co., 8315 Oliver Bldg., Jackson, Mich. Valuable book (in colors) on Rheumatism comes free with the Drafts. Send no money—only your name. Write today.

MONEY Made quickly by smart men. F. Gunn, 31 Home St., N. Y.

PATENTS Gr. book free. Highest refs. Best results. Promptness assured. WATSON E. COLEMAN, Patent Lawyer, Washington, D. C.

WRITE A for us today. It may be worth SONG THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS. Hayes Music Co., 571 Hayes Block, Chicago

IMPORTED FRENCH ART POST CARDS
Value 10c. 12 for 5c. Actresses, Beauties, Scenes, Novelties. Send 10c. for sample dozen. C. F. MERRIS, 497, 16th Ave., Asbury, N. Y.

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He tells you how. Every young man and woman should have this book. Handsomely bound in cloth and gold. Contains many valuable secrets. Mailed for 25 cents. A. S. HOUSTON PUBLISHING COMPANY, 7 Rose Street, New York

OPIUM or Morphine Habit cured. Painless. Mild treatment. We positively destroy entire craving where other remedies failed. Correspondence confidential. HARRIS INSTITUTE, Room 439 180 W. 23d St., NEW YORK.

BE AN ACTOR or AN ACTRESS or ORATOR. Best course professional in the world. Compositions corrected while you learn. Dramatic Art, Elocution, Oratory, Pantomime, Physical Culture, etc. CHICAGO ACADEMY OF ELOCUTION, 1525 Chicago Opera House Building, Chicago

This ELEGANT Watch $3.75
Before you buy a watch write us and send for our 64 page free catalogue. Contains 1000 illustrations of watches, diamonds, jewelry, etc. Shows you how to save from $10 to $50 on a watch. Tells you how to order watches, diamonds, jewelry, etc., by mail. Explains our system of selling on credit. Anyone can have a watch or diamond. Write us today. If you receive it soon it is our $50 WATCH CHAIN C. O. D. $3.75. Write for it today. Address: STEIN & GOLDSTEIN, Dept. 1, 92 to 98 State St., Chicago. Reference: Any bank or business house in Chicago. Capital $1,000,000. Established 1879. Incorporated 1903.

MEN ONLY
CACTUS CREAM CURES SEXUALITY. RESTORES VITALITY. BANISHES WEAKNESS.
Renews sprightliness and vigor.
Cactus Cream is an entirely new and scientific remedy applied solely to the sexual organs. Has only to be gently rubbed in to benefit. For continuous positive power results are unlimited. Makes most men strong and strong men stronger. This is the original and only Cactus Cream, and is sent to all parts of the world. $1.00 a box. Sealed sample 10c. Have many testimonials. Write for them. Booklet free.
C. B. PERRY PRO. CO., LYNDHURST, New York

GOLD FISH FREE
We will give you this two cent value free and talk with each one. No money required. We want one person in each locality to whom we may show the goods to be sold. Send your name on a postal. Write us today.
THE MIDLAND MFG. CO., Desk N, Toledo, Ohio

When answering advertisements you will oblige the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

THE HOUSE OF PERIL.

A Story of the World's Deepest Mysteries.

By GEORGE WEYMOUTH.

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Begun in No. 51, Dec. 22. Subscriptions can begin with that issue, or back copies can be obtained from news stands, or our agents, or by mail from office of publication.

CHAPTER XXI.
TO THE RESCUE.

While O'Burke and Alex were engaging a stout steam launch for our trip on the lake to the rescue of Frank Willoughby, I went to a public telephone and called up Jinarad at her grandmother's home.

"We have not found the diamond," said I. "But what is better than that, we have found, I believe, where Frank is."

"Oh, I am so glad," said the dear voice.

"Our information has to be certain, and we will start at once to rescue him," I continued. "I do not want to frighten you, but we learn that he has been slightly wounded, and is detained. We shall take a doctor with us, and the chief of police will go. It is probable that we will return before night."

Grandmother has been sleeping almost the whole time since you left, and I have been careful not to disturb her. Of course, she has sent a nurse to watch over Jinarad. The poor fellow has not awakened yet.

"Your Cousin Emily is not well this morning, and her father is strangely broken and excited. Be sure you come back safely, all you brave, good girl. I believe things will work out for the best. Don't stay on the water any longer than is necessary. Use your common sense and your courage will be needed for the trying times ahead."

After lingering for a minute over a fond and foolish good-bye to the dear girl, I hurried to the office of the doctor. Before entering Alex had found the doctor while O'Burke had obtained the boat, and within ten minutes we were aboard and churning through the water at a rapid rate.

Our boat-house was the place when we had described it to him, and within three hours we were drawing into the little bay. We could see the white cottage of the bidden beneath the trees, and the surroundings all were the same that we had seen in the magic crystal.

Now, however, smoke was pouring out of the chimney too, which showed that the place was inhabited.

There was a landing place for the launch on the shallow beach, but after the captain of our little craft had anchored near our boat as he believed go, he waded to the beach and brought back the rowboat in which we had seen the negro, Sambo, and the red-bearded man.

We were soon ashore, and approached the house cautiously, with our weapons ready to draw. The chief and his aid had myself were well armed, and I felt sure that I was able to take care of the red-bearded Swede, even if he should show fight.

There was no fight in the Swede, however. He was as mild as a lamb when he came to the door, and he smiled him by name.

"How do you do, Mr. McGregor?" he said to Alex. "I wonder now what brings you here this morning?"

"We came to get the young man you brought here," said Alex.

"And we have here a doctor to dress his wound," said the chief.

"Then I'm glad to see you, gentlemen," said the Swede heard. "Step in, but step softly, for the young man is asleep, and he needs the rest."

We followed the man quietly into the house and took the seats offered us. We found that the cottage was of considerable size and was furnished in a most luxurious way. It evidently was a sort of summer bungalow of some wealthy man, to which he might retreat from the cares of a city.

"Tell us all about your connection with this case," said the chief, turning suddenly to the Swede. "And tell us the truth, Olsan, or it may go hard with you."

"Sure, I'll tell you the truth," said Olsen. "I haven't done anything unlawful that I know of, though it may look a little queer to you. It looks somewhat out of the ordinary to me, and I am glad to get that you have come and brought a doctor. That relieves me of any further responsibility."

"Who brought the wounded young man. Tell your story," said O'Burke sternly.

"Then—then," said the Swede, "you know, I'm a fisherman, and my hang-out generally is around the lake front.

"Early this morning a man comes to me and asks if I can sail a yacht and I tell him yes. He says he wants to go for a crew of men to help me, which of course is easy."

"Who was this man?" asked the chief.

"He said his name was Smith," said the Swede, after a little hesitation.

"Had you ever seen him before?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know his name?"

"No, but it is not Smith. It's something that sounds like Saunders."

"It was O'Saunders," I exclaimed.

"Yes, that sounds like it. Anyway, he's an old man, a most peculiar old man, and an aristocrat, if there is one in town. He owns the yacht Emily D., though he does not sail her above twice a year."

"We know him," said O'Burke. "Go on, Olsen."

"Well, this man, he says theft a young friend of his has got into some sort of trouble. He wouldn't say what. But he said the young man had been hurt in a scrimmage, and that it was necessary for him to be out of sight for a couple of days. He wanted me to bring him down here and take care of him."

"I see," said O'Burke.

"We found the young man asleep on the yacht. As near as I can tell his wound is trifling, and it has been dressed properly by a doctor. But I don't like the way he sleeps. I'm afraid they've been giving him some sort of dope."

"Has he slept all the time?"

"Why, no. He woke up for a moment when I helped him out of the yacht, but he fell over in the skiff and went to sleep again."

"When we came ashore I waked him for another moment and he grumbled at me for disturbing him, though he walked to the house. Once inside the room he said he was sleepy, and I put him to bed and that's all I know about him."

"Let me look at him," said the doctor.

Olsen led the way into a bed chamber, where we found Frank Willoughby, a little pale, but otherwise looking as well as usual.

He was sleeping like an infant, and he did not awaken when the doctor examined him.

The wound in his breast had been bleeding a little, so the doctor did not hesitate to remove the dressing.

"This seems to be a serious hurt," said the physician. "It has been cared for scientifically and is not in any danger of blood poisoning. I will merely put on a new dressing. There is nothing further to be done."

"Why does he sleep so soundly?" I asked, for the first time taking part in the doctor.

"It will not be fatal?" I asked, anxiously.

"Oh, no," said the doctor, smiling. "It will not hurt him at all. But he will sleep for several hours yet."

"Will it be safe to take him back to town?"

"Perfectly safe. I suggest that we find a cot, if there is such a thing in the house, and carry him on board the launch. It is better not to disturb his sleep. His wound is now bleeding, and he will do well."

We searched through the house until we found what we wanted. It was a cot, and we found that a folded comforter for a mattress.

We laid the sleeping young man upon this and covered him with a sheet.

Then four looked rather like a procession of pall-bearers carrying a dead man as we wended our way from the cottage down the gravelly path.

If Felicia could have seen her brother then, without a doubt it was a merry sleep and not death that held him in thraldom, her heart would have been broken.

We waded in the water above our knees to avoid using the small boat, and the red-bearded Swede followed us aboard the launch.

We placed Frank in the little cabin, and when we reached the city he still was asleep.

CHAPTER XXII.
A MESSAGE FROM EMILY.

Frank Willoughby was at home and in bed, still sleeping.

Accustomed as I was in his own room, his grandmother was sleeping.

Downstairs, where the nurse sitting quietly by his couch, lay Jinarad, the Silent One. He also was sleeping.

Jinarad had come dreadful spell had been cast upon these three members of one household.

Yet the doctors—there were two of them, now, and both famed and skilful—said that the sleep was not dangerous, that it was the best thing in the world for the young man, and that he would be better.

Yet our mystery was no nearer solution than it had been before. In truth, mystery was being added to mystery.

How had Frank gained his wound, and why had Mr. O'Isander hidden him away, afterward denying all knowledge of his whereabouts?

It was useless to speculate upon these questions.

When Frank awoke he could tell us. When discovered, Jinarad's grandmother might tell us about the loss of the diamond.

It seemed to me now that O'Isander was concerned in the diamond robbery. ➔ had suspected Jim from the first, and the story of the Swede showed that he had been connected with the wounding and disappearance of Frank.

O'Burke wanted to place him in custody.

"No," said I. "He is an old man, and it seems to me that he is at least half mad. Let us wait. Perhaps the thing will work itself out. He is not the man to run away. In the morning when our sleeping friends awake perhaps we will hear the whole story."

"All right," said O'Burke. "I really am violating my duty to some extent in waiting; but I am of your opinion in regard to O'Isander. He will not run away."

I remained with Felicia until the evening, and saw that she had plenty of nurses and plenty of help.

Doctor Warburton, in consideration of a handsome fee, agreed to leave his other patients with his assistants and remain at the House of Peril throughout the night, so as to be there in case any one of his patients awoke.

It was nine o'clock at night when I at last reached my hotel. I had not heard from the d'Osanders during the day, and I was anxious about them and almost resolved to find a message from Emily awaiting me at the desk of the office.

The message had just come by a special carrier, the clerk said.

With a presentiment of disaster I tore open the envelope and read:

"Please come at once. Father is very bad. I don't know what to do. For Heaven's sake come.

I was weary from the excitement of a long trying day, but I went to the d'Osanders' house in fact as I would carry me.

Emily met me at the door. Her face was white, and I could see that her eyes were red with the traces of recent tears.

"Oh, I am so glad to see you," she exclaimed, as she seized my hand. "Father has been in a sort of stupor all day, since you left this morning."

"Have you called a physician?" I asked.

"Our doctor has been here twice. He looked at him, but could do nothing, and says that when the stupor passes away father will be his normal self again, or his trouble will become more acute."

"Where is your father?" I asked.

"He is in his room. He is the I have just left him. He has been restless for the last half hour. Rushad is with him now. The old Hindu knows his wants better than a hired nurse. He is most devoted to father."

"Mr. Willoughby has been found," I said, hoping to take her mind from her own troubles by directing her thoughts to a new channel. "He has been wounded, but his hurt is thought not to be serious. We have left him home, and he now is asleep."

"Poor Frank," she exclaimed. "He is a good boy."

"Mrs. Willoughby is sleeping still," I went on. "And Jinarad, the silent old Hindu, is asleep. He never has spoken a word since I brought him. I thought he was dead this morning when we found him."

"Oh, that accursed gem!" she exclaimed. "It has been the ruin of our family. I hope we may find it."

"I think it will be found," I said, "and it will go back to the rock resting place in the temple at Lhassa. My dear Emily, you must cheer up. Don't feel such a weight of grief. Heaven sends you. Your father is old. He has lived the span of two generations, and when the very old break down, it is well to expect the worst."

She was weeping now and she could not reply.

"It is not to be expected that either he or Mrs. Willoughby will ever recover their old strength for any length of time." I felt so much sympathy for the poor old people were approaching the end that I dared to speak to her of this way.

"Will you stay in the house with me tonight?" she asked. "I feel such a terrible nameless fear, and I do not know what to do, nor to whom to call for help. I have no one to help me. I have lost my only childish girl, and have depended so much upon father ever since a child, that now when he is stricken I feel the most forlorn of all creatures."

"I will remain in the house until morning. But you must take courage. You ought to see what a brave, noble woman Felicia Peters bears her trying hour."

"I thought thus to arouse her pride.

"Yes, I know, but I am not she," she cried angrily. "I have always hated her. She has treated me ever with the pretended goodness and meekness ever since we were children."

"Do not speak of Felicia thus," I exclaimed, sternly. "I will not bear it, even from you."

"Oh, I expect you to take her part," she said. "Go on away and leave me alone. I do not want your company, nor your help."

"Very well, I will," I cried, and taking up my hat I made for the door.

I was about to pass out, but the sound of sobs fell upon my ear and I paused. Poor Emily had evidently thrown herself upon the floor on her face and was weeping bitterly.

Instantly my heart smote me.

Why should I be so severe with this sorrow-stricken girl, so willful and proud though she might be, and unjust to her cousin Felicia? For she had been queen of her great beauty and by the adoration of the men who had loved her and some whom had died for her.

I had not only refused her love, but I adored another cousin, and that was natural for the proud, willful beauty to be unjust. At any rate she was my unreasonable.

She was her theme of grief.

My anger melted and pity filled my heart. I turned back into the room and closed back into the room I had just left. She did not seem to hear me, and I did not disturb her. I thought it would be better to let her weep away some of her bitterness.

A good cry is a relief to a woman when her heart is overflowing with bitterness and anguish. And I knew that I never was seldom to the beautiful eyes of my cousin Emily.

I stood there, waiting silently and patiently for perhaps half an hour, when her sobs subsided, and she arose slowly and wearily from her place on the floor.

"Are you there, Hugh?" she asked in surprise. "I thought you had gone to leave me. I am a wicked, heartless girl."

"You are a troubled, stricken girl," I said. "My dear cousin Emily, this is not a time for you to harbor a spirit of bitterness to any living creature, least of all to Felicia."

"Forgive me, Hugh."

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"Precely," I said. "And now, you would better retire. Let me take your place at your father's bedside. I will watch with him through the night."

"Rahbad can be with him," she said. "If father wakes he will know what to do. He is the most devoted of servants. I know you are worn out with the trials of this day, and we know not what is before us for tomorrow."

"I will do as you think best," I said.

"Then I will go to father and send the servant to you. He will show you your room, and when he comes I will sleep on the couch in the little room next to father. If he grows worse we will wake you."

Old Rahbad came and piloted me to a room on the upper floor. I took the precaution of locking my door before I retired, and within a few minutes I had fallen into a dreamless sleep.

CHAPTER XXIII.

END OF A LONG LIFE.

When I awoke the sunshine was streaming in at my window.

It was early, probably not much past six o'clock, and a cheerful breakfast in another room.

I arose and dressed, however, and stepped out into the hall.

What was my surprise to see Mr. d'Olsander before me in the corridor.

The old man had a bathrobe wrapped about him and was walking slowly along, his eyes bent upon the floor.

For a moment surprise kept me silent, and he walked by me without looking up or recognizing my presence.

I kept my eyes upon him, but said nothing, and when he walked around the corner, going stairway and started up toward the attic, some instinct made me follow him.

I knew he was going to his skylit studio.

I had vowed that never would I be with him in that room alone, for I could not forget the strange power he was able to gather from the sun.

But in his broken condition I had lost my fear of him, and I followed softly in his wake, scarcely knowing what he would do.

He seemed to be in a kind of waking trance, and although I closed the door behind me with some unnecessary noise, he did not hear.

He walked to the eastern end of the room, and stood with his hands against the glass and gazed at the sunrise for a few minutes.

"Farewell, O, Sun," he said, solemnly. "For long thou hast given me life and strength and vigor, but by the power of the Supreme thou hast given them to all earthly creatures.

"My day has run its course. The sun of life is setting. I will put aside this garment of flesh and enter into the next existence. What it will be, I know not, but I believe and feel that the cycle of life tends ever upward. Slowly I am evolving toward the perfect existence, and when my time comes to return to sun to again, may the wisdom I have learned in this life be with me. May I avoid the paths of folly, the disharmony of sin.

"Oh, Sun, farewell for a little time!"

He turned about and faced me, but there was nothing in his expression or manner that led me to believe he saw me.

Somehow I felt that I was in the presence of death, and the solemn spell that lay upon me could not be broken. I tried to speak, but I was dumb.

I tried to move, but I was motionless.

Mr. d'Olsander moved slowly across the room to a little safe, before which he stooped down. He opened it.

My imagination leaped ahead of his movements.

I seemed to know what treasure he had hidden beneath the steel doors of the safe.

When he arose again and turned toward me I was not astonished to see that he held upon the palm of his right hand the treasure for which he had prolonged and yet wasted his life—the lost diamond.

How or why he had taken it I did not know then or afterward.

But he held the great diamond in his hand and gazed upon it with a sort of reproach.

I heard the door of the studio open behind me, but I did not look around.

Emily stood beside me.

She was pale and trembling, and gazed at her father with dilating, terror-stricken eyes.

I passed my arm about her waist to support her, else I believe she would have fallen.

"Father," she exclaimed, softly.

But he did not look up.

He was so intent upon the great jewel that he could not even hear his daughter's voice.

Oh, thou treasure of the gods!" he murmured softly. "Thou for whom men have sinned and died, and who brings not profit, but not peace to my father's house—I farewell!

"Thou goest back now to thy treasure house in the Himalayan hills, even, as I return to my home in the bosom of this universe. No more shalt thou vex me with a passion of desire.

"My great hath over-reached itself at last, as I knew it would, and while I possess the thing I long have coveted, there is no pleasure for me in

[illegible]

He was silent for a time, and a sort of majesty seemed to fall upon him, as he seemed one who stood upon the threshold of life's greatest mystery—Death.

Still holding the sunbeam upon his outstretched palm, he turned toward the east again and walked to the window.

There was a little table on that side of the room, with a chair beside it, facing the east.

He sat down and laid the gem in the center of the table.

As the light smote the stone it gleamed with unwonted brilliance.

Mr. d'Olsander rested his elbows upon the edge of the table and his chin sunk in his palms.

I approached him in wonder, still supporting Emily. The spell of silence was upon us yet, and though we approached quite near to him we did not disturb his meditations.

For the space of five minutes perhaps, though it seemed half a life time, he was motionless and voiceless.

Then he raised his hands and stretched them out toward the sun.

"No longer thou givest me life," he cried in a loud voice. "No longer thou responds to my appeals, and it is well!"

He rubbed his hands slowly together as I had seen him do upon that first day when we stood in the little park, before he parralyzed my arm with his strange power.

Little sparks and flashes, as of electricity, came from between his palms.

The diamond, directly beneath his hands, seemed to blaze as if with heat, and it shone until it blinded me. Even the sunlight seemed dim beside the radiance of that magnificent jewel.

No longer Life thou givest, O, Sun!

Then give me Death!"

His palms were parted, and he sunk his face forward upon them. His fingers rested upon the diamond, and an open hand was pressed against either cheek.

He was dead, motionless.

Emily sank down, a heavy burden upon my arm. She had fainted.

I carried her to a little couch upon the other side of the room and laid her gently down.

Then I went to the old man and placed my hand upon his shoulder.

"Mr. d'Olsander," I said, gently.

There was no response.

I raised his head, and spoke to him again.

But never in this world would that outworn body answer to earth's call.

Mr. d'Olsander was dead, and the diamond was found.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WILLOUGHBY HOUSE.

What remains to be told can be told quickly.

Mrs. Willoughby never woke from her sleep. She passed peacefully into the Great Beyond, a little after sunrise—that morning, and the brother and sister were laid together.

Frank awoke, nearly well, and soon recovered. He could not solve the mystery of his abduction. He heard voices downstairs at night, and had been stricken down in the dining room by an unseen hand. He had been unconscious when they carried him away.

Rahbad, the silent One, when he awoke from his long sleep was on the road to health again, but not a word would he say, nor a word did he ever give as to the fate of the Jewel.

"Let me go back to my home in the Forbidden City," he said. "I will die there, where I was born. And I will go alone. A new word has been spoken to me, and it is the

[illegible]

The sun of thy [illegible] has shadowed, oh, Hugh Farnham! Thou art release. From thy pilgrimage. Give me the stone, and I [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[

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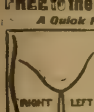

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Want of Exercise weakens and relaxes the Bowel-Muscles, just as it weakens Arm and Leg muscles.

Old Dr. Cascaret goes directly after these Bowel-Muscles. He wakes them up just as a cold bath would wake up a lazy person.

Then he works them (through the nerves) till they get so strong from that Exercise that they don't need any more help to do their duty.

* * *

Heavy dinners, late suppers, whiskey, wine or beer drinking, nervous excitement, sudden exposure to cold or heat and a dozen other everyday likelihoods tire the Bowel-Muscles.

In such cases a little Cascaret in time is worth fifty dollars worth of Treatment later on, to say nothing of the suffering, discomfort, loss of Business Energy, and loss of Social Sunshine it saves.

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Little thin Cascaret Box, shaped so you don't notice its presence in purse or vest-pocket.

Contains six Candy tablets—Price Ten Cents a Box at any Druggist's.

Be sure you get the genuine, made only by the Sterling Remedy Company, and never sold in bulk. Every tablet stamped "CCC."

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THE NITRO HANDLERS.

A Story of the Oil Fields.

By WALTER A. SINCLAIR.

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CHAPTER I.

THE TORPEDO WAGON.

Impending destruction came noiselessly. A moment before Parkland City basked in drowsiness. The next moment it was palsied as though by nightmare. To suddenly be forced to drop sleepy daily pursuits and commonplaces, and to brace for the shock of death, sudden, fantastic and wholesale, this was the thing that paralyzed the whole town. It was true, that David Carter grasped the fluttering skirts of chance, the primordial spirit of self-preservation cooperating with a desperate fear that save in town.

A coward could have fled but to die. David Carter grappled with destruction and lived.

Parkland City was a village taking to itself the title "City" to cover its own smallness. And that which had forced the city to its prosperity and hopes now swooped to remove it from the map. Parkland was threatened with being literally hoisted by its own pet petard. And its name was nitroglycerin.

Parkland City was the railroad town of the then newly-developed oil fields of Eastern Indiana. From the outskirts of the village one looked out over muddy pikes flanked by dreary, desolate fields of bluish furrowed yellow-black soil. Away to the northeast, north, west, were dotted clumps of scrubby trees the glare of the morning sun was reflected by the rusted tanks of the "rigs" and derrick-drill derricks and by the slightly older tripods that supported the pumps "pulling" at the flowing wells.

The scene was at once unlovely and symbolical. Symbolical of the spirit that was taking the treasure from this unbeautiful land, leaving only ugly derricks and ruined oil-soaked farm lands. It was not a pretty scene.

The town huddled closely to its Main street, made feeble efforts to continue its solidarity across the railway tracks. And yet, five hundred persons lived there and of these a majority lived along the path traversed that day by the potent agent of destruction.

Spring's drowsiness lay heavy on the town. Even the chickens seemed to forage with languid air, while the village dogs snored solemnly under foot. Along Main street stood the mud-spattered rigs and lumbering farm wagons of those who came to the stores. Many of these vehicles slouched across the road with the horses' heads at the curb and the shafts in the muscles that line the walls of the Intestines and Bowels.

* * *

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The scene was at once unlovely and symbolical. Symbolical of the spirit that was taking the treasure from this unbeautiful land, leaving only ugly derricks and ruined oil-soaked farm lands. It was not a pretty scene.

The town huddled closely to its Main street, made feeble efforts to continue its solidarity across the railway tracks. And yet, five hundred persons lived there and of these a majority lived along the path traversed that day by the potent agent of destruction.

Spring's drowsiness lay heavy on the town. Even the chickens seemed to forage with languid air, while the village dogs snored solemnly under foot. Along Main street stood the mud-spattered rigs and lumbering farm wagons of those who came to the stores. Many of these vehicles slouched across the road with the horses' heads at the curb and the shafts in the muscles that line the walls of the Intestines and Bowels.

* * *

Want of Exercise weakens and relaxes the Bowel-Muscles, just as it weakens Arm and Leg muscles.

Old Dr. Cascaret goes directly after these Bowel-Muscles. He wakes them up just as a cold bath would wake up a lazy person.

Then he works them (through the nerves) till they get so strong from that Exercise that they don't need any more help to do their duty.

* * *

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Dave, by leaning over could lay one hand on the back of the nearest runaway. As the pony under the touch of the bridle slacked enough to let the horse forge ahead Dave snatched one of the lines trailing over the animal's back. The leather burned hotly from the friction as it slid through his fingers, but he clutched it and held the rein long length until he had reached the knot where the reins were tied together in lieu of a buckle.

He had the reins of the runaway now, but Dave was too sensible to try stopping them from the saddle. He knew his tight pony would be as nothing against the galloping draft horses. He must mount the seat of the vehicle.

Thinking and acting were simultaneous and sudden. Any moment his pony might dash against a wagon at the curb. Every instant was precious. It was no easy task to ride beside the lurching torpedo-wagon, steering his own mount by the pressure of his knees, but Dave was skilled in the ways of the saddle and he rode with all the recklessness of youth.

The seconds were too crowded with effort to allow time for caution or fear. In, close to the wagon, he crowded his over responsive steed. Dave's left arm was slipped through the reins on the team. He seized the two hand-grips on the wagon seat. His feet left the stirrups and his left foot managed to reach the little iron step above the wheel that swerved so crazily. Grasping the dashboard grip with his right hand he threw his weight on his left foot, swung his right free of the pony's back and pulled himself to the seat of the careening wagon. The knowledge that he must succeed served him to the act.

It was a second's work to brace his feet against the dashboard and draw tight the reins. These he pulled upon carefully, so as not to strain to the snapping point the leather ribbons on which the safety of the town depended.

His voice was commanding and reassuring, his reining steady, but the fear-strick-

It had just missed and that was all.

en horses had not run their course and were still in full flight. The touch of the lines seemed to have no effect on their speed. He could only sit tight and try to steer them clear of all collisions.

And in that crowded instant the harsh, long shriek of a locomotive whistle disturbed the echoes, and Dave's heart seemed to stop. All his desperate attempts to save Parkland City seemed shattered by that blast. Not alone the inhabitants, but the passengers of the morning eastbound accommodation seemed doomed in the impending crash.

Only a short half block remained between him and the tracks. On either side of the street were stores and other houses built up to the curb. Dave knew the whistle had given the blast and the position of the smoke seen to the west over a one-story store, that the train was coming at gradually slacking speed into the station.

Trains in stopping, blocked Main street if the accommodation reached the crossing first, moving or still, it would form a rubber esse. It was hopeless to consider stopping the team in that distance. If he turned aside he would ram into a building, doubtless causing the explosion. If he drove straight ahead he might strike the blocking train or be struck by the locomotive in crossing. There was but one thing to save them all—reach the tracks ahead of the engine. It was one chance in a thousand!

Dave's mind raced and took in the situation in a flash. Calculations, chances, consequences and decision were crowded into the brief instant in which action was simultaneous. With a wild shout he snatched the whip from its socket and plied it loudly around the flanks of the team.

Driven by shouts, whip, and the locomotive's whistle and incoming rumble, both horses were charging against their collars in a burst of speed unheard of in them. The stout torpedo wagon whipped madly over the pavement straight for the crossing and on the seat the tanned and hardy youth urged them to greater speed.

The Roman charioteer driving headless of crashing hub and only intent on being the swiftest, was as nothing compared to this farmer boy. The charioteer risked only his life or that of his rival. David Carter, riding in the momentary danger of his own death, strove to save those of the passengers and of the townspeople. It was a race with death.

The horses, panting and sweating, cut down the distance in leaps and bounds. The half block would be finished in the next second. It was the breathless, crucial moment as the horses emerged from the shelter of the buildings and dashed onto the unprotected crossing.

The roar of the incoming train had momentarily sounded nearer and still nearer, and now seemed to burst on them and engulf youth and horses in a flood of sound, as the runaways flashed from behind the buildings and plunged madly across the tracks. The engine seemed to boom up directly over them. The hiss and spurt of the steam gave the last lash to the leaping horses as they hurdled the planked rails.

David Carter, white-faced, with teeth clenched, gazed to the front and, hand wielding the lash, comprehended in general from the corner of his eye how near the two rushing forces were. He heard the sudden thunder of the wheels, subsiding almost above his head. He saw nothing of the faces of the engineer and fireman suddenly gone gray. He drove.

There was a sharp grinding of the emergency brakes and the rumbling crash of draw-heads pounding together as the locomotive skidded along with the flying beneath the wheels. The pilot had just missed the tail of the torpedo wagon by so fine a margin that it seemed miraculous, and it had just missed and that was all.

The engineer brought the train to a jolting stop two hundred feet past the crossing. The first clash of brakes had thrown every passenger forward against the seats ahead.

A LAZY LIVER

May be only a tired liver, or a starved liver. It would be a stupid as well as savage thing to beat a weary or starved man because he lagged in his work. So in treating the lagging, torpid liver it is a great mistake to lash it with strong drastic drugs. A torpid liver is but an indication of an ill-nourished, enfeebled body whose organs are weary with over-work. Start with the stomach and allied organs of digestion and nutrition. Put them in working order and see how quickly your liver will become active. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery has made many marvelous cures of "liver complaint," or torpid liver, by its wonderful control over the organs of digestion and nutrition. It restores the normal activity of the stomach, increases the secretions of the blood-making glands, cleanses the system of poisonous accumulations, and so relieves the liver of the burdens imposed upon it by the defection of other organs.

Symptoms. If you have bitter or bad taste in the morning, poor or variable appetite, coated tongue, foul breath, constipated or irregular bowels, feel weak, easily tired, despondent, frequent headaches, pain or distress in "small of back," guawing or distressed feeling in stomach, perhaps nausea, bitter or sour "risings" in throat after eating, and kindred symptoms of weak stomach and torpid liver, or biliousness, no medicine will relieve you more promptly or cure you more permanently than Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery.

Perhaps only a part of the above symptoms will be present at one time and yet point to torpid liver, or biliousness and weak stomach. Avoid all hot bread and biscuits, griddle cakes and other indigestible food and take the "Golden Medical Discovery" regularly and *stick to it* we say until you are vigorous and strong.

Of Golden Seal root, which is one of the principal ingredients of "Golden Medical Discovery," Dr. Roberts Barthlow, of Jefferson Medical College, says: "Very useful as a stomachic (stomach) tonic and in atonic dyspepsia. Cures gastric (stomach) catarrh and headaches accompanying same."

Dr. Grover Coe, of New York, says: "Hydrastis (Golden Seal root) exercises an especial influence over mucous surfaces. Upon the liver it acts with equal certainty and efficacy. As a cholagogue (liver invigorator) it has few equals." Dr. Coe also advises it for affections of the spleen and other abdominal viscera generally, and for scrofulous and glandular diseases, cutaneous eruptions indigestion, debility, chronic diarrhea, constipation, also in several affections peculiar to women, and in all chronic derangements of the liver, also for chronic inflammation of bladder, for which Dr. Coe says "it is one of the most reliable agents of cure."

Prof. John King, M. D., late of Cincinnati, author of the AMERICAN DISPENSATORY, gives it a prominent place among medicinal agents, reiterates all the foregoing writers have said about it, as does also Prof. John M. Scudder, M. D., late of Cincinnati. Dr. Scudder says: "It stimulates the digestive processes and increases the assimilation of food. By these means *the blood is enriched.* * * * the consequent improvement on the glandular and nervous systems are naturally results." Dr. Scudder further says, "in relation to its general effect upon the system, *there is no medicine in use about which there is such general unanimity of opinion.* It is universally regarded as the tonic, useful in all debilitated states * * *."

Prof. Finley Ellingwood, M. D., of Bennett Medical College, Chicago, says of Golden Seal root: "It is a most superior remedy in catarrhal gastritis (inflammation of the stomach), chronic constipation, general debility, in convalescence from protracted fevers, in prostrating night-sweats. *It is an important remedy in disorders of the uvula.*" (This agent, Golden Seal root, is an important ingredient of Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription for woman's weaknesses, as well as of the "Golden Medical Discovery.") Dr. Ellingwood continues, "in *all* catarrhal conditions is useful."

Much more, did space permit, could be quoted from prominent authorities as to the wonderful curative properties possessed by Golden Seal root.

We want to assure the reader that "Golden Medical Discovery" can be relied upon to do all that is claimed for Golden Seal root in the cure of all the various diseases as set forth in the above brief extracts, for most prominent and important ingredient is Golden Seal root. This agent is, however, strongly reinforced, and its curative action greatly enhanced by the addition, in just the right proportion, of Queen's root, Stone root, Black Cherrybark, Bloodroot, Mandrake root and chemically pure glycerine. All of these are happily and harmoniously blended into a most perfect pharmaceutical compound, now favorably known throughout most of the civilized countries of the world. Bear in mind that each and every ingredient entering into the "Discovery" has received the endorsements of the leading medical men of our land, who prescribe such, named above in the highest terms. What other medicine put up for sale through druggists can show such *professional* endorsement? For dyspepsia, liver troubles, all chronic catarrhal affections of whatever name or nature, lingering coughs, bronchial, throat and lung affections, the "Discovery" can be relied upon as a sovereign *remedy.*

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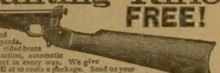

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others, had alighted from the train when it stopped. He had been standing on the platform when the train shaved the nitro wagon and he had seen the narrow escape of the wagon and incidentally of the train.

His face had gone white as ashes at the sight, but it was apoplectically purple now as he rushed up in company with a few passengers. He was a rather stout man and his clothes showed the skill of a good tailor. His manner and voice were those of one used to command.

"Get off that wagon," he shouted, as he rushed up.

Dave, who had been looking over his shoulder at the approaching crowd, gazed at the man in open-eyed amazement. He was too stunned to speak.

"Come on, get off I said," roared the man, grasping the hand rail and putting one foot on the wheel hub to step up.

"You had better keep off," warned Dave, suddenly finding his voice and leaning over to look down on the man's excited face. The other relaxed his grip and addressed Dave for the benefit of those coming up.

"I saw the whole matter and I order you to get off. It is an outrage that your reckless driving should be allowed to endanger the lives of every one on the train as well as those of the townspeople. And what right have you to expose Orbaugh's property—so that it might have been wiped out? We would have been held responsible—my associates and I—who employ Orbaugh. I order you off that wagon with more authority than Orbaugh. Now get."

The words rushed forth with a swiftness and impetuosity that could not be checked.

"Why, Orbaugh's not my boss——" began Dave.

"That's more reason why you should get off that seat."

"I won't leave this team driverless to run away again," retorted Dave.

"I'll tend the nags myself, if we can't find a man. I'm Norman Ellsworth, President of the Parkland & Indianapolis Oil Company, and I order you for the last time to——"

"Say, Mister, you're crazy," said one of the townspeople, who were arriving and listening in amazement to the attack on Dave. "That lad's saved this town and that train. Three cheers for Dave Carter!"

There was an excited, nervous cheer and friends who had witnessed Dave's action swarmed to the side of the wagon offering congratulations and seeking to shake his hand. Norman Ellsworth gazed at this demonstration in amazement and then asked for the meaning of it. Two prominent merchants whom he knew, and who had left their stores to rush out with the others, told him briefly and glowingly how Dave had dashed to the rescue of the town.

"Will you accept my public apology?" asked Ellsworth, stepping to the side of the wagon. "I took snap judgment and spoke too hastily. You are a hero, my boy, and I'd be proud to take your hand."

"That's all right. Don't bother about it," said Dave, generously, as he took the proffered hand. "It was only a case of trying. It looked like we'd all die, anyway, so I thought I might as well make one try. It seemed a choice of dying standing still or moving."

"That's the talk I like," roared the oil man boisterously, trying to cover with enthusiasm his first bad break. "But who's responsible for this runaway?" he added fiercely.

Elbowed forward by those who knew him, Cornelius Ettinger stood before his employer's boss.

"My hat blew off," he mumbled, "and I got off to——"

"To leave a wagon of nitro run wild while you chased a cheap hat!" shouted Ellsworth. "Outrageous! you ought to be prosecuted. You're discharged, understand? Go to Orbaugh and get your pay and keep off our leases. Is there any Orbaugh man here?"

"I am," said a man, stepping from the crowd. Ellsworth ordered him shortly to take charge of the torpedo wagon. Ettinger withdrew sullenly muttering against "injustice." Dave drew out of the crowd and hurried back across the tracks looking for his pony. He found the faithful little horse waiting at the curb near where his master had left him. Dave was preparing to mount when he heard Ellsworth's voice behind him:

"Here, youngster, no running away before I can ask if there is not something I can do for you?"

"You refused to do the thing I wished," answered Dave. The oil man looked surprised. "I received a letter from you this morning refusing to prospect and drill on my father's farm adjoining the Ramsey lease."

"Oh, are you one of them?" exclaimed Ellsworth. "Nearly everybody here has written requesting, or insisting we drill on their farms. It costs money and we can not suit all. Tell me, are there indications?"

"There are. I prospected around and found plenty of indications that there is oil there," said Dave.

"And I refused your request to drill, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, I've changed my mind. We will drill your lease."

Next week you will find another installment of this splendid story in the Ledger. Read it to the end; it will both interest and do you good. In this story you will find out how they do things in the oil region, the dangers and trials of that sort of life, and how a brave youth won out. If you would like one of our King Cameras or six of our fine patterns, just send us $1.00 for a year's subscriptions, and a camera or the patterns will be sent you without cost. See pages thirteen and fifteen.

The Girl and the Banker.

(Continued from page three.)

hand to the banker, and Linn turned and went back into the bank.

For two hours longer that afternoon Banker Linn tried to fight away the fears that persisted in coming into his consciousness at a dozen different places. Always he saw the smiling face of Joe Graham, triumphant, challenging, confident. He tried to reach Redding by telephone, determined to play his card immediately and not give the reporter time to circumvent him. Redding had left his office. He tried the home and the maid told him that Mr. and Mrs. Redding had gone out of the city for a few days, and Redding would not return until Monday. Four days to wait, with that leech-like Graham continually on his trail!

He hung up the receiver with an exclamation of anger, fear and helplessness, and called to the cashier. Paul had left. Linn telephoned to him at his home the information that he would leave the city for the Northern woods.

"I feel all worked out, Paul," he said. "I'll run up to St. Paul, and then into the woods for a week or so. That will put me all straight again. You can run things here at the bank till I get back. Might call on Redding if you are in doubt. Good-bye."

The time for flight had come—years before he had anticipated it. While Joe Graham had only suspicions, founded on practically nothing, the banker's guilty conscience, that had accumulated for years and been fed on hundreds of dishonest acts, clothed the reporter with absolute knowledge. Reason would have told him that Graham could be certain of nothing, but fear had drowned the banker's reason. A few minutes he sat before his desk, his head resting upon it. Then with a hysterical laugh he lifted his head, until the yellow sunlight coming through the window shone upon his face, and said aloud:

"Well, John Johnson, the end has come. A woman started you on the road to success, another woman started you on the road to dishonesty, and another one will bring you to judgment. There may be one somewhere who could save you from yourself, but I doubt if you would recognize her should you meet her."

With feverish haste he worked at the bank for an hour longer. There were many incriminating papers he could not take with him, that he must destroy, and it was almost dark when he had gone through his desk. The vaults were locked and he did not have a key to the door. He swore at his luck and tried to think if there was anything in his safety drawer that would tell much. He forgot the secret drawer behind it, then thought of it, with an oath, then smiled at the certainty that no one knew of its existence except himself. He had secured in his pocket the little memorandum book which he had thoughtlessly shown Margaret Redding when telling her it was the only thing that could prove her father's innocence. He would carry it with him, drag Redding down in the ruin of the bank and so be revenged upon the girl who had caused his own downfall.

He had drawn twelve thousand dollars from the bank that day. He still had all this money. He would have liked to get into the cash drawer, but the time lock was set, and besides an actual theft of money would bring discovery of his peculations and flight all the sooner. It would be best for him to leave the bank just as the cashier had left it. This would give him several days' start, perhaps two weeks, if no one should become actively suspicious before the time elapsed that he had set for his vacation.

The electric lights were gleaming along Milwaukee avenue when he left the bank and hurried home to get some personal belongings. At ten o'clock that night he boarded an eastbound train. Joe Graham, disguised with a heavy beard, stood beside him at the window when he bought a ticket to New York, and watched the banker board the train.

"I wish I knew enough to arrest him," the reporter said to himself, as he watched the train pull out of the station.

Graham went to his hotel and slept fourteen hours. He had been on duty almost continually for two days and nights. The next day he called on Margaret and was surprised to learn of the absence of her father. He told her of the flight of Linn and had her telegraph Redding to return. The telegram did not reach Redding, who had gone on a hunting trip, until ten days later, and in the meantime Graham was unsuccessfully endeavoring to get definite information from Cashier Knudson. He was surprised when the cashier informed him that Linn was in the neighborhood of St. Paul, but said nothing and overcame his desire to smile at the information. Graham decided, however, that the cashier had best be watched.

When Redding returned he was amazed at the story Graham told him, Margaret standing by. He was for immediately calling in the State Bank Examiner.

"No," Graham persuaded, "there may be nothing wrong, despite our suspicions. Even if there is it may be a small enough affair to make good and hush up, and thus save the bank from failure. It will be best for you to do a little investigating and examining on your own hook. Then you can call in the officials if that seems necessary."

Redding took the reporter's advice. The first day at the bank he found nothing, the cashier refusing to assist him. The second day Redding frightened Knudson into complaisance, almost assistance. That was Saturday. The two men pored over the books and notes and mortgages until nearly dark.

"I'm afraid we'll have to call in the examiner," was Redding's remark as they ended the day's work. "It looks bad, but I'm not enough of a banker to tell just where and how much."

This very dramatic narrative, founded on the recent criminal conduct of a Chicago banker, will be continued in the Ledger of next week. It is well worth reading to the end. Are you taking the Ledger regularly? If not, we urge you to do so, for during the next few months some powerful stories will appear in these pages. Look at pages thirteen and fifteen where we tell you that for each subscription we give, entirely free, a King Camera or any six patterns you may select from our pattern display. Don't delay your subscription.

Bluebell's Secret;

(Continued from page seven.)

life. "I live here. You dare not keep me out of my own house."

"Jist lik a little mo' an' I'll throw yer inter de street!" cried Yellow Dick.

"Mouster! You have no right, I say, to keep me out of my own home. You're a rogue!"

"I'm what God made me."

By this time Dick had pulled the woman from the step, his fingers sinking into her flesh, and in another moment she was going down the pavement in his clutches.

"Unhand me!" she hissed. "You have no right—"

"You go right on," broke in the mulatto. "It's purty late fo' so fine a lady ter be out in de streets."

She glared at him like a tigress, but could not break the hold on her patrician arm.

Yellow Dick did not speak again. He hurried her on and on until at last he came upon the carriage waiting under a clump of trees.

"Dat your carriage?" queried Dick with a glance at his companion.

There was no reply.

The next minute Dick had forced his charge to the vehicle and with one hand pulled open a door, waking the man on the box.

He threw the woman into the depths of the carriage without ceremony and cried to the startled driver:

"De game lost out ternight, sah. She's in de carriage. Now, sah, you kin take yer fortune, Yaller-gal bonest," and, stepping briskly aside to avoid the wheels of the vehicle, Yellow Dick stood and grinned till it had passed out of sight.

Next week's Ledger will contain the concluding instalment of this very strange story. Are you a regular reader of the Ledger? If not, then permit us to enroll you as a subscriber. You will surely not regret it. If you would like one of our King Chimeras or any of our splendid patterns about lately free then send in your subscription. For cameras and patterns see pages thirteen and fifteen.

In Good Season

In a place in New Jersey the town officers had just put some fire extinguishers in their big buildings. One day one of the buildings caught fire, and the extinguishers failed to do their work.

A few days later at the town meeting some citizens tried to learn the reason.

After they had freely discussed the subject, one of them said: "Mr. Chairman, I make a motion that the fire extinguishers be examined ten days before every fire."

Gentleman burglars think it is up to them to break into society.

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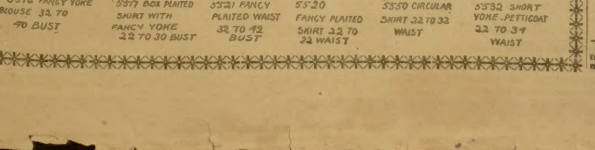

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When answering advertisements you will favor the advertiser and the publishers by mentioning The Chicago Ledger.

FOR YOUTHFUL EYES

SHE DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO

There was a girl—perhaps you know
The little maiden's name,
For maids in country and in town
Are apt to be the same.
She went to bed at 8 o'clock
And slept the whole night through,
And when the morning came she said
She didn't know what to do!

She went down stairs and breakfasted,
With many a frown and pout,
And quarreled with the servants, while
She ordered them about;
She made her little brother cry,
Then cried herself—she knew
She's have no fun that day, because
She didn't know what to do!

She had more dolls than you could count,
She had a hundred toys,
And bookshelves filled with handsome books
For little girls and boys,
And dainty dinner sets and games
To play with one or two;
But yet she wouldn't play, because
She didn't know what to do!

So all day long, from morn till night,
This little maid would sigh
And mope and fret about the house,
And say she didn't know why
She never could have any fun,
Like little sister Sue—
Because with all her pretty things,
She didn't know what to do!

Faithful Dobbin.

Dobbin was a jolly little pony, full of tricks, and he and Phil were great friends.

"I can ride quite well now," said the little boy. "Dobbin never lets me fall off, and he comes the very minute I call."

"Well, I am afraid Dobbin must do without you this afternoon, dear," said auntie, smiling, "for I want you to go to uncle in the hayfields and to him this letter. It is important, and I can't leave baby to go myself."

"Very well, auntie."

And make haste back, because if it gets dark you might lose your way on the common."

Phil promised and trotted into the road. Dobbin held up his head and came eagerly up to the gate, but Phil said:

"Not today, Dobbin," so the dear old pony, who did not do much work now, stood still and watched the little boy out of sight over the heathery common. Then he went on munching the grass until the sun set, and it began to grow dark.

"Isn't Phil coming to drive me into the stable?" he thought. "Here comes the farmer—I won't let him take me in."

The farmer came to coax Dobbin in, but it was no use, and presently he said, "Where is Phil?"

"He has not come back yet," answered auntie.

"He started back from the fields early enough," said the farmer; and, feeling anxious, he went into the road, forgetting to shut the gate. The next moment Dobbin followed him, and before he could be stopped had trotted off over the common.

"Dobbin, Dobbin," called a little voice, and in another second Dobbin came upon Phil sitting on the grass, crying.

"Oh! dear Dobbin, I've hurt my foot," he sobbed.

The pony rubbed his nose on Phil's shoulder, but did not seem to know what to do.

"I wish I could climb on your back," said Phil.

Dobbin thought about it a little while, and then knelt gently down beside him.

"Shall I get on your back, Dobbin? If I could you could carry me home."

"Yes," neighed Dobbin.

So Phil, with some difficulty climbed on his back, then Dobbin rose and carried him home as gently as if he knew all about it.

Auntie had been terribly frightened, and was very glad to see Phil safe again. She took him in and tied up his foot for him and soon made him comfortable.

But Dobbin was not satisfied. He would not be put to bed by anyone else. So the farmer carried the little boy out to the stable; Dobbin followed, and was soon quite happy, especially when Phil threw his arms around his neck and whispered: "Thank you so much, dear Dobbin!"

Polly Putoff.

Her real name was Polly Putnam, but everybody called her Polly Putoff. Of course, you can guess how she came to have such a name. It was because she put off everything as long as she possibly could.

"Oh! you can depend on Polly for one thing," Uncle Will would say. "You can depend on her putting off everything, but that is all you can depend on." And I am sorry to say he spoke the truth.

"Polly, Polly," mother would say in despair, "how shall I ever break you of this dreadful habit?"

It was just three days to Polly's birthday, and she had been wondering very much what her mother and father intended to give her. She thought a music box would be the best thing, but she was almost afraid to hope for that. A man who went about selling them had brought some to the house, and Polly had gone wild with delight over their pretty musical tinkle.

"Polly," mother said that morning, "here is a letter that I want you to post before school."

"Yes, mother," answered Polly, putting the letter in her pocket, "I will post it in the morning." she said faintly.

"No, no," answered mother, "The man to whom the letter is directed went away this evening, and I haven't got his address. It really only matters to yourself, for it was an order for a music box for your birthday."

"O mother!" exclaimed Polly, "is it really too late?"

"I don't know where he is now," said her mother. "if you had not put off posting the letter he would have received it before he started and sent the music box. It is too late now."

Wasn't that a hard lesson? It cured Polly, though; and she has nearly lost her old name.

The Coughing Bean.

We have heard of the pitcher plant that captures unwary insects and eats them, and we have been beguiled by the tale of the sinuous tree, but we never heard of any product of the tropics more strange than the coughing bean. The bean is not the product of an excited imagination, the fantasy of a dream phantasmagoria, but a very matter-of-fact fact. What makes the bean cough? Why, that's easy. It coughs for the same reason you cough—to clear its throat. I mean its pores. Those pores are very sensitive to any irritation. When the pores become clogged with dust, gas collects within the plant cells, finally bursting out in a paroxysm of coughing and sneezing, which effectually disposes of the dust. This respiratory plant is sometimes cultivated as a house plant, and the weekly sweeping of the carpets sets it to coughing violently.—Star Monthly.

A Bee's Day.

In the Evangel we are told of the amount of work which a busy bee will accomplish in one day. Every head of clover consists of about sixty flower tubes, each of which contains a very small quantity of sugar. Bees will often visit a hundred heads of clover before returning to the hive, and in order to obtain the sugar necessary for a load must, therefore, thrust their tongues into 6,000 different flowers. A bee will make twenty trips a day when the clover patch is convenient to the hive, and thus will draw the sugar from 120,000 different flowers in the course of a single day's work.

Not a Local Hero.

During a third-grade recitation in a country school there came up something about the physical exercise.

The teacher asked, "How many have heard of a gymnasium?"

Jim who? said one little girl.

Big Magic Lantern FREE

to BOYS AND GIRLS for selling only 6 of our beautiful colored pictures at 25c each. Only requires a few minutes of your time.

This is an Imported Brass Mounted Stereopticon, SHOWING LARGE COLORED PICTURES. We give with it a large assortment of colored pictures, many funny, and two moving picture slides.

This Magic Lantern is fitted with Double Telescope Crystal Lenses. Lantern is Fully Lacquered in Red or Black, with Nickel-Plated Trimmings. Each picture slide has metal lamps for slides. Complete with all lamp and large assortment of colored slides. Send for 6 of our small colored pictures to sell at 25c each. Everybody you show them to will buy one or more at this price, as they measure 10x31 inches and are just suitable for framing. Write us today and we will send the MAGIC LANTERN and Complete Outfit at once. We also give you a large assortment of two-colored posters and admission tickets, so you can give shows and charge admission. Send no money, just send your name and address. This is a better lantern than other firms are offering for selling their unmounted goods. We take back all unsold pictures. Address

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BIG DOLL AND COMPLETE KITCHEN SET

This bisque doll is nearly half a yard tall, is beautifully dressed in satins and laces, closes and opens its eyes, has shoes and stockings that can be taken off and put on. Of the best dolls ever offered as a premium. The kitchen set consists of a large assortment of finely finished kitchen utensils just the right size for dolly. Send us your name and address today and we will send you six of our beautiful assorted art pictures to sell at 25c each. Everybody will buy one or more pictures from you as they measure 10 x 32 inches and are just suitable for framing. It will only take you a few minutes to sell the six pictures. When sold, send us the $1.50 and we will send you both the Doll and Kitchen Set at once exactly as described. We are making this wonderful offer to advertise our goods and it is the most liberal offer ever made by a reliable concern. Remember we give you all our big premiums for selling only six pictures. Write today. It costs you nothing to try. Address

MYER ART CO., Dept. 8, Chicago

BOYS 500 SHOT REPEATING AIR-RIFLE FREE

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A TALE OF THREE ADVENTURERS.
HEAR A TALE OF MARINERS PUTTING OUT TO SEA
CAPTAIN COOK AND SECOND MATE BOLD AS BOLD CAN BE
JACK THE RASCAL BARELY TEN
BROWN-HAIRED NANCY EIGHT AND THEN
TODDLING LITTLE BABY BEN
SAILORS THREE
HEAR A TALE OF WONDERS NEW-DISCOVERED LANDS
FEARFUL FIGHTS WITH MAKE BELIEVE ROVING PIRATE BANDS
AND WHERE ALL THE NUTS GROW SUNKEN TREASURE — AND YOU KNOW
STORY BOOKS WILL MAKE IT SO!
IN THE SANDS
HEAR A TALE OF SHIPWRECKS
WITH THE SET OF SUN
THE OLD WASH-TUB
ON THE POND
SANK WITH EVERY ONE
DRIPPING SAILORS,
ONE TWO THREE
CARRIED SADLY HOME TO TEA
THINK THEY'LL GO
NO MORE TO SEA
JUST FUN FUN FUN

Not a Bad Answer.

The teacher asked, "How many have heard of a gymnasium?"

"Jim who?" said one little girl.

CAN YOU FIND?

OUR FLEET SAILED INTO MANILA BAY,
AND THINGS GOT VERY STEWY
WE KNOCKED THE EYE OF THE SPANIARD OUT
FIND HERE ROSS KNOCKER DEWEY.